

# DIVERSIONS OF HISTORY

*introduced by*

PETER QUENNELL

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## INTRODUCTION

"**T**HEY TELL ME," wrote Horace Walpole in one of his incomparable letters to his friends, "Mr. Hume has had sight of King James's journals; I wish I could see all the trifling passages that he will not deign to admit into history. I do not love great folks till they have pulled off their buskins and put on their slippers, because I do not care sixpence for what they would be thought, but for what they are." In every country and in every age there have been historians and students of history to whom the by-ways of research have seemed more tempting—and, indeed, sometimes more rewarding—than the wide and much travelled high roads; and, oddly enough, one of the keenest eighteenth-century collectors of historical *miscellanea* herself played an historical part as the consort of a British sovereign. It is well known that Caroline of Anspach, the erudite wife of George II, recognized the superlative interest of Holbein's red-chalk portrait-sketches and took prompt and practical steps to ensure their preservation; but it is less often remembered that she collected documents, including both ancient state papers and contemporary pamphlets and *jeux d'esprit*, which (she informed Lord Egmont) piled up "six foot high from the ground" in her private cabinet, and were eventually pasted into a gigantic scrapbook, sumptuously bound in red-and-gold leather. That scrapbook has today completely vanished. Can it have been destroyed during the reign of her grandson of George III? But, had it survived, how much this privileged lover of the past might have added to our knowledge of her own and earlier periods!

Just as the anecdotists—the Aubreys and Spences—have an important place in literature, so the explorer of by-roads and the patient gatherer of social and biographical details have their place in historical studies. The domestic background of great events and the private oddities of great men may perhaps be over-emphasized; yet, if history loses touch with humanity, it is apt to develop into a peculiarly sterile form of scholarship.

No historian can hope to hold our attention who does not possess an imaginative sense of the past; and nothing brings the past to life so immediately and so vividly as some sudden glimpse of a salient character or dramatic incident, which reminds us that the makers of history, even at times when they may appear to be the expression of forces and principles mightier than themselves, do not cease for a moment to exist as individual human beings. The personal characteristics of Pitt or Napoleon—revealed, for example, in an apparently trivial anecdote about the badness of Napoleon's manners or the intemperance of Pitt's private habits—cannot be neglected in any consideration of their historic destiny.

Among the essays published in the present volume few deal with major historical subjects. Their authors (whose contributions were first printed in the pages of *History Today*) have usually sought their themes some little distance from the main thoroughfares. Many of the episodes that they explore might be described as "side-shows". Thus Mr. Jonathan Blow relates with a wealth of detail how, during the fifteenth century, while the majority of their landed neighbours were busy committing collective suicide on the battlefields of the Wars of the Roses, two noble families, the Berkeleys and the Talbots, were so absorbed in a private feud that they escaped the worst results of the nation-wide conflict. They had the strange distinction of staging the last private battle fought upon English soil. Mr. Blow has studied not only the antecedents of the quarrel (which, incidentally, help to illustrate the domestic background of the English mediaeval system in a period when it was fast declining) but the topography of the battle itself and the composition of the armies engaged. He heightens his picture with a series of revelatory touches, mentioning, for instance, the crowd of little boys who, as the armoured horsemen and dismounted Talbot tenantry streamed over the skyline by Nibley Church, followed hard upon the warriors' heels and, determined not to miss the fighting, clambered up into the branches of convenient trees.

Though it had no important sequel, the Battle of Nibley Green remains a minor landmark. For an episode may be inconclusive, yet deserve a note in history; and, despite the fact

that Sennacherib's introduction of the cotton-plant to the West was frustrated by the break-up of the Assyrian Empire and the collapse of agricultural life along the Tigris valley, it is fascinating to learn from Monsieur Goossens how that bold experiment was originally launched. The general reader thinks of the Assyrian monarchs as a savage race of warriors and huntsmen. But Asurbanipal, the grandson of Sennacherib, who was proud to commemorate his warlike ferocity, "was equally proud of his learning and considered it the most distinctive feature of his personality": witness the inscription in which he declares that "Marduk, master of the gods, granted me as a gift a receptive mind and ample power of thought . . . I have studied the heavens . . . I have solved the laborious problems of division and multiplication . . . I have read the artistic script of Sumer and the dark Akkadian . . . taking pleasure in the reading of stones coming from before the flood." Sennacherib had been an ardent botanist. His descendant is now revealed as an astronomer, mathematician and devoted archaeologist.

Another reward that awaits the explorer of historical by-roads is his discovery of wholly unexpected resemblances between the present period and the remote past. Except for students of the Carolingian Age, who would have guessed that Charlemagne's subjects were troubled by visions of "space-ships" and haunted by rumours of "germ-warfare"? Yet such were the alarming reports that Agobard, the enlightened Bishop of Lyons, confronted in his diocese. Cloud-borne craft, navigated by aerial sailors, were said to swoop down and despoil the crops; and many alleged culprits, threatened with torture or death, confessed that they had scattered poisonous dust over the fields on the secret instructions of one of Charlemagne's enemies. Agobard, who was a man of goodwill (though, later, he himself succumbed to a virulent attack of anti-semitism), halted the tide of mob hysteria "by dint of patient reasoning and pleading". Mr. Allen Cabaniss gives a lucid account of this curiously suggestive incident. But there is one problem he does not attempt to settle. Why do the recurrent nightmares of humanity so often adopt a similar form?

In the type of study to which we refer, an individual, himself comparatively uninfluential, may now and then throw fresh

light upon an important period of history. Thus an eighth-century Chinese poet, Ts'ên Shên—selections of whose literary remains are here translated for the first time by the distinguished modern poet and famous sinologist, Dr. Arthur Waley—gives an unforgettable glimpse of imperialist expansion in Central Asia under the rule of the T'ang emperors. Far more graphically than any official report, the verses of this scholar-administrator describe the frontier conditions in which he and his colleagues existed upon the lonely verges of Turkestan:

“ In a strange land, beyond the Yin-shan,  
In a lonely town by the side of a snowy lake,  
Where autumn brings only the wild geese,  
Where all summer the cricket never sings—  
A brush of rain and the carpeted walls drip,  
A puff of wind, and the felt awnings stink—  
At Lun-t'ai, ten thousand leagues from home,  
How little has happened in all these three years.”

The voice of the homesick civil-servant, whether the outpost of Empire he holds is in the marches of Turkestan, the forests of Africa or among the mountains of the North-West frontier, varies remarkably little from age to age.

Equally revealing—to skip forward a thousand years—is Mr. J. M. Thompson's essay on the French Revolution as seen through the eyes of a provincial schoolboy. No revolution, the author points out, follows an established pattern: “ It is always this revolution or that, arising out of the special circumstances of an age, a people, a state, and following a pattern appropriate to those circumstances and impossible in any others.” We should therefore be wrong to approach the bloody upheaval that began in 1789 “ with ready-made generalizations about the origins or the course of revolutionary movements. It must be studied from the evidence of what actually happened in Paris and France . . . ” And, although Edmond Géraud was both young and insignificant, he too can provide us with valuable evidence about the course of the upheaval as it affected a contemporary. Some episodes he found deeply stirring: others passed him almost unperceived. When he reached Paris from Bordeaux in December 1789, he noticed at first very few

signs of the tremendous drama that was then on foot. The streets of Paris were quiet and orderly: "We are just as safe here as anywhere else," (his elder companion wrote to Edmond's anxious parents). "The enemies of order are too weak and its defenders too strong for any public disturbance. Such small incidents as occur only bother the police: citizens and foreigners alike live in perfect security."

When, in July 1791, serious outbreaks of violence and bloodshed disturbed the peace of the capital, Edmond accepted the "patriotic" view that they could be attributed to the machinations of treacherous and subversive elements—for example, the "conservatives, aristocrats, and young fops, licentious, talkative, quarrelsome people", who thronged the class-rooms of the lycée that he himself attended. He describes in detail the hideous prison massacres of 1793, but seems to have regarded them as a legitimate expression of the people's righteous rage: "at last they have come—the days of the people's wrath; at last the thunder-bolts of its vengeance are falling on every side . . ." The King, who had taken refuge in the Assembly, "showed nothing but a stupid and cruel apathy; he asked for a loaf and ate it coldly and heartlessly." As for the Queen "the Austrian she-wolf", her attitude, he declares, was "full of shamelessness and pride."

From the above it will already be clear that the Diversions collected in this volume are not confined to any one quarter of the globe or to any single period of history. We observe Queen Victoria visiting her Irish subjects, and receiving, soon after the great Potato Famine, a wildly enthusiastic welcome; Goya commenting on the Peninsular War; General Malet hatching a fantastic conspiracy that, ramshackle as it was both in conception and in execution, for a moment seemed calculated to bring down the whole structure of Napoleon's power. Mr. Jon Manchip White gives us an absorbing "essay in historical detection" by investigating the factual basis that underlies the romantic legend of the loves of Tristan and Isolt; Mr. Laslett portrays the rise and decline of an ambitious English family; Mr. Arnold Whitridge relates how the United States acquired by purchase the vast territories of Louisiana; and Mr. George Edinger tells the strange and little known story of Russia's

abandonment of her extensive holdings in the American continent. Had she retained and exploited them, the relationship of East and West might have developed along very different lines; and the study of "what might have been" in history will always fascinate the speculative reader, who suspects that what actually happened is not necessarily what *had* to happen, since historical determinism is seldom proof against the attacks of an open and enquiring mind. Though powerful forces may assume a certain direction, again and again they have been deflected from the course charted for them by political prophets. Sheer accident has often taken a hand; had the snows of winter not descended much earlier than usual there would have been no Retreat from Moscow. But the unpredictability of human nature may also supply a contributory cause. And it is with human nature at work on the material of history that many of our contributors are concerned in the series of Diversions here reprinted.

PETER QUENNELL



# LIFE UNDER THE HAN DYNASTY

by Arthur Waley

GLANCING AT THE RELIEFS illustrated in *Han Tomb Art*<sup>1</sup> one sees at once that the people who produced them loved hunting, eating, drinking, dancing, music, charioteering, parlour games, and ancient stories, and that the world of their imagination was peopled with dragons, phoenixes, gryphons and semi-animal divinities. One sees too that they had mastered many complicated techniques (as shown, for example, in the pictures of the salt industry and of agriculture). But anyone not versed in Chinese history may well ask what relation the remote corner of China where the reliefs were found bore to the rest of the Empire, may wonder whether the people were war-like or peaceful, how they were governed, how educated, what did they think about and say when they were not (as so often in these pictures) playing backgammon, careering in chariots or shooting wild-geese? It is with a view to answering some of these questions and in the hope of throwing a little new light on these interesting reliefs that I have put together the following brief notes on the life and thought of the period.

Turning to the map (p. 12) you will see that Szechwan, the province from which the reliefs come, lies in the south-west corner of China. The capital of the province, Ch'eng-tu, is about one hundred and seventy miles north of the Yangtze river, and is connected with it by a tributary, the Min. Chia-ting, where most of the reliefs were found, is on the Min, about half-way to the junction of the Min with the Yangtze. The whole area south of Ch'eng-tu was inhabited chiefly by non-Chinese tribes. The extent to which they were directly administered by the Chinese differed at different times. The tribesmen were sedentary rice-growers, and no great cultural

<sup>1</sup> Illustrations from *Han Tomb Art of West China*, by courtesy of the publishers, University of California Press and Cambridge University Press, 1951.



Map of Szechwan in the 1st century A.D

gap separated them from the Chinese. In the first century they were independent. In the second they put themselves voluntarily under Chinese rule. There was then a small administrative centre at Chia-ting. But the only big town on the way up the Min to Ch'eng-tu was near the point where P'eng-shan is marked on our map. Here was the city of Chien-wei with its 411,378 inhabitants, a figure that includes the small districts that were administered from Chien-wei. Ch'eng-tu, the capital of the province, some forty miles to the north, had 1,350,476

inhabitants. The figure (that of the census of A.D. 111?) again includes the population of some minor towns. But probably the figure for Ch'eng-tu itself was at least as high as a million. The poorer quarters of this vast city were very closely built and fires spread so rapidly that artisans were not allowed to use artificial light in their workshops. About A.D. 80 this law was relaxed, but workshops that used lamps or candles were compelled to keep full water-buckets standing about.

Lo-yang, the capital of China at this period, was a smaller place than Ch'eng-tu, having only 1,010,827 inhabitants. The immense size of the Szechwan towns was made possible by the extreme fertility of the soil and the skilful system of irrigation carried out in very early times. It was also due in part to the relatively peaceful history of this area, cut off from the continual upheavals in central China by difficult mountain passes. True, in the early part of the first century there was a separatist movement, suppressed in A.D. 36 after bitter fighting, and from time to time there were small risings of aborigines. But on the whole people who made the reliefs led peaceful lives. They were subject to military conscription, but certainly saw much less active service than, for example, the Chinese on the northern frontier, who were constantly attacked by the Huns.

The provinces were ruled by officials sent from the capital, and one of the burning questions during the first and second centuries A.D. was how these and other civil servants ought to be selected. First, in any case, came the system of authorized patronage. Officials reaching a certain degree of eminence had the right to claim a post for one or more sons or other descendants. But only a small proportion of successful Han officials began their careers in this way. In theory it was the duty of provincial governors to send up to the capital for employment in State service anyone in their district who was conspicuous for good conduct, intelligence or learning, or who had already shown remarkable capacities in local government work. The commonest ground given for sending up candidates was good conduct, technically expressed by the term *hsiao-lien*, that is to say, "proper behaviour towards elders and incorruptibility." This formula was, one may well imagine, often used when recommending friends and followers and may in many cases

have served as a high-sounding cover for pure patronage. Candidates recommended for proficiency in book-learning could, of course, be given written tests if there was any doubt about their claims. In times of stress, when the departments at the capital were at a loss how to deal with a particular crisis whether civil or military, a special appeal was sent out for the despatch to the capital of critics who felt capable of pointing out the Government's mistakes and suggesting a better policy. If their views obtained political support they were often entrusted with high executive posts. Individual vacancies were sometimes filled by examination. Thus early in the second century there was a vacancy in the Department of State Affairs (*Shang-shu*). Candidates for the vacancy were examined in "Government affairs, astronomy, and the arts of Tao" (meaning, in particular, doctrines of military and political strategy). The successful candidate, we are told, frightened off his strongest rival by discovering a prophecy that if this rival secured the post he would be assassinated. As we shall see, the part played in Han life by prophetic texts was immense.

But despite the various devices whereby it might have been expected that men of talent and good character from all over China would obtain posts in the Civil Service, in practice almost all the good jobs went to members of influential families who lived within a radius of two or three hundred miles round Lo-yang, the capital, and among these, a high proportion came from near Nan-yang (about one hundred and forty miles south of Lo-yang), the place where the founder of the Latter Han dynasty was born and where the old family friends of the Imperial clan still had their estates. Already in A.D. 35 a high official named Kuo Hsi ventured to suggest that "in filling official posts men of outstanding talent and good character from all over China should be selected. It is not a good thing only to use Nan-yang men." The Emperor expressed agreement, but the preference for Nan-yang men continued. Some years later a sifting of candidates for promotion resulted in the rejection of all those sent up from the provinces. The men chosen were all residents in the capital, a result "very discouraging to scholars in other parts of China."

Even more discouraging, except to the very rich, was the

fact that, at any rate during the second century, despite all the propagandist parade of equal opportunity, posts, titles and honours of all kinds were on sale. It is said that towards the end of the second century a tariff was publicly displayed, giving the price of a dukedom, a governorship, a prefectship, and so on. Those who could not pay in advance could do so after appointment, but had to pay double. There is a story that Ts'sui Leih paid five million cash (something like £3,000, in so far as an equivalent is possible) for a post. When he came to his investiture he looked so prosperous that the Emperor whispered to one of his favourites: "I believe we could have run him up to ten million."

The rich men we know most about were large landowners. We read of an estate of 700 *ch'ing* (about 8,000 English acres). Estates of several thousand acres were common. We know much less about the merchants, whose scale of living, we are often told, equalled that of the greatest landowners. Chinese history was written by officials for officials, and naturally deals chiefly with the doings of officials. Merchants were a class apart, "soiled" by their ignoble pursuit of gain. They (and their sons and grandsons) were not allowed either to own land or to hold official posts. We are even told that a certain Wang Lieh (A.D. 142-219) deliberately "soiled" himself by becoming a merchant in order to avoid serving as assistant to a governor of whom he disapproved. More and more peasants, complains Huan T'an in the first century, are giving up agriculture and taking to commerce. And no wonder; for instead of toiling in the fields the merchant merely sits back and enjoys himself while "young men of middle-class families, hired as his clerks, do all the real work." A rather different view seems to have been taken of foreign traders, if we may judge from the case of An Hsuan, a Parthian (Persian) merchant who lived at the Chinese capital at the end of the second century. He was awarded the honorary rank of General of the Horseguards, which gave him a status equivalent to that of a provincial governor, perhaps for services of a diplomatic kind in Central Asia. An Hsuan was a pious Buddhist layman and in A.D. 181, having acquired some knowledge of Chinese, he helped in the translation of two short Buddhist texts. He hap-

pens to be the only Near Eastern merchant of this period whose name we know. But foreign merchants were probably numerous at Lo-yang. "These intinerant foreigners, where do they come from?" asks a song of the period, "and what do they bring from their various lands? Rugs and carpets and frankincense; rosemary, camphor and thorough-wort." Rugs and carpets came from Central Asia, frankincense probably from Persia, rosemary-water from the Mediterranean, camphor from the South Seas, and oil of thorough-wort (*eupatorium*) from what is now Southern Hunan, about three hundred miles north-west of Canton.

Increased contact with the outside world was not an un-mixed blessing. The whole of the Latter Han period was darkened by repeated outbreaks of the "great pestilence." It made its first appearance in A.D. 37 and 38, in Eastern China, where "people died in their tens of thousands." It is mentioned in A.D. 50, but not again till 119, when the government "supplied wood for coffins," an obligation which was statutory when there was more than one death in the same household. In 125 it reached Lo-yang, the capital. There were further outbreaks in 151, 161, 171, 173, 179, 182, 185 and 217. It occurred chiefly in February and March; what the symptoms were we are not told. It has been suggested that it spread to the West and was the same disease that the legions of Marcus Aurelius brought back from Partia to Italy in A.D. 166. As the first area mentioned in connection with it is the province of Yang-chou, which comprised a large part of the south-east coast of China, it is likely that it was brought by sailors from India or Indonesia. I give these rather full details because, though several general works on history mention the Chinese pestilence, the information given is very incomplete and inaccurate.

Turning from social phenomena to the general ideas of this period, one is struck at once by the prevalence of the belief that the course of nature is influenced by the behaviour of human beings, and in particular by that of the Emperor and the ruling classes. Persons in authority accepted without question that droughts, eclipses, earthquakes, plagues and locusts were their responsibility and would cease if they amended their ways.

Thus a drought in A.D. 29 was attributed to the large number of prisoners awaiting trial. The accumulated resentment of these prisoners and the distress of their relations had, it was said, influenced "the humours of Heaven," and all those accused of minor offences were released. In the spring of A.D. 31 there was an eclipse of the sun. The Emperor knew that he must have done something wrong, but could not think what it was. So he ordered all officials who could throw any light on the subject to write a confidential letter, saying frankly (and being careful not to address him as "Holy Man") what they thought he had done wrong.

The official ideology was a mixture of Confucianism and Taoism, based on the idea that Confucius took lessons from Lao Tzu, the legendary father of Taoism. But the old ethical Confucianism, with its ideal of mildness and gentleness, of goodness (*jen*) and forbearance carried, as it were, to the *n*th degree, lingers on in many anecdotes of the period. For example, about A.D. 140, a certain Liu K'uan, the son of a very high official, was riding in his bull-cart when someone who had lost a bull thought he recognized it in the one that Liu was driving. "Without a word Liu handed over the bull and went home on foot." Presently the lost bull turned up elsewhere and the loser came back with Liu's bull, apologizing profusely. "Creatures tend to be much alike," said Liu, "and small mistakes are easily made. I am only sorry that you have had the trouble of bringing it back." It should be noted that it was usually considered out of the question for people in good social position to go anywhere on foot.

But most Confucians of the period were little concerned with the ethical teachings of early Confucianism. Their interest was in comparatively recent apocryphal works, purporting to embody secret teachings of the Master, handed down orally by initiates. Very popular too were books of prophecy, in which Confucius and other ancient sages foretell future events, sometimes in a cryptic manner, sometimes actually mentioning the Han dynasty by name. Alchemy and astrology were much studied; it was in fact a Golden Age of occultism. Hosts of demons walked abroad, and at times it was necessary to bolt the palace doors for days on end to keep them out.

One famous writer, Wang Ch'ung (died A.D. 97), tried to carve his way through the jungle of contemporary superstition. His book, the *Lun Heng*, has been partially translated into English by a German scholar, and I will not dwell on it here, except to point out that, though many of his ideas seem to us more sensible than those of his contemporaries, you will naturally not find that all his beliefs coincide with yours. He scoffed at astrology, at the Confucian apocrypha, at the belief that sacrifices can deflect the course of nature, and so on ; but he devotes page after page to proving that dragons live in the water and not on roofs of houses or up trees. To me far more sympathetic than Wang Ch'ung, though doubtless not so important in the history of human thought, is Chung-chang T'ung, a writer who was born in 180 and died in 220, the year in which the Han dynasty came to a close and China was split up into a number of local kingdoms. Here is his day-dream of an idyllic existence, sketched out to explain why he refused all offers of public employment : " All I ask is good lands and a spacious house, with hills behind and a flowing stream in front, ringed in with ponds and pools, set about with bamboos and trees, a vegetable garden to the south, an orchard to the north. . . . Sometimes a stroll through the fields or in my park, a ramble through the woods, a bathe in some clear stream, enjoying the cool breeze ; or again to hook the swimming carp or shoot the wild swan on high . . . or at home to calm my spirit with the pleasure of the inner-chamber, ponder over Lao Tzu's Mysterious Void, breathe in and out till my vital forces are in harmony and I have achieved some semblance of the Perfect Man. Then with two or three companions of philosophic bent discuss the Way or study some book, . . . and so ramble through life at ease, with a cursory glance at Heaven and Earth and all that lies between, free from the censure of my fellow-men."

Such was Chung-chang T'ung's early day-dream. But some twelve years later, towards the close both of his own brief existence and of the Han dynasty itself, we find him in very different mood. He is looking back over the whole history of China, with its ever-increasing violence and disorder. " In less than five hundred years," he says, " there have been three



great disasters,<sup>2</sup> and at intervals between them, innumerable minor disorders. Each revolution has sown greater distrust and involved more appalling cruelties : so that if this process continues in the future, our utter destruction is ensured. It may be that in days to come some Holy Man will arrive and put a stop to all this ; but I cannot imagine what means he will employ. Or again it may be that Heaven intends this process to continue to the bitter end, in which case it is equally hard to imagine just what form that end will take." Today, confronted with the pattern of our own history, we can only echo his words.

*Han Tomb Art* is in the form of a descriptive catalogue. It has an interesting introduction dealing with the provenance and technique of the reliefs, together with copious notes and a very full bibliography. Mr. Rudolph, who is Chairman of the Department of Oriental Languages in the University of California, admits that certain scenes are difficult to interpret and invites further suggestions. I have, therefore, tried in a few instances to amplify or correct his interpretations. Unlike reliefs of the same period from Eastern China, the hundred-odd specimens in this book have little writing on them. This makes the subjects particularly hard to identify, and indeed most of the certain identifications are possible only because similar scenes occur elsewhere with explanatory inscriptions. Schools and literacy were probably much commoner in Eastern China, with its strong Confucian tradition, than in remote Szechwan. Books were written either on wooden slips sewn together, which weighed so much that they were difficult to transport, or on silk, which was very expensive. In the second century A.D. improvements on the manufacture of paper made it possible to use it as a writing-material, but its use spread slowly.

Though a little Buddhism already existed in China at this time, there is no trace of its influence in these reliefs. The objects of the designs seem to be to surround the dead with pictures of all that had interested him in life—agriculture, industry, hunting, charioteering, eating, drinking, gambling, along with

<sup>2</sup> The revolution that led to the founding of the Han dynasty (c 206 B.C.), the revolution of Wang Mang that drove the Han temporarily from power (c A.D. 6), and the revolution that led to the collapse of the dynasty

such adjuncts of the feast as dancing and juggling. The scenes from legend and history (which are few) perhaps illustrate the favourite stories of reciters who were called in to entertain the guests. But so many scenes are unidentified that it is rash to generalize. Here are a few notes on some of the plates I have chosen for reproduction. Plate 1 shows a musician playing on a large zither of the kind, I should say, known as *se*. Below on the left would appear to be a male singer, and on the right a female dancer with trailing skirts and long sleeves. There were two kinds of dancing in ancient China. On the one hand, ritual male dances that imitated in a symbolic and highly stylized way the deeds of ancient heroes ("we dance to make deeds known") and magic dances that were performed to bring rain, make crops grow and in general to affect the course of nature. "What men sing and dance," says Fen Yen (c. A.D. 1-76). "Heaven will certainly accord." On the other hand, dances performed by professional dancing-girls, which were regarded simply as a pleasant adjunct to dinner-parties and were in no sense magical or sacred. The dance here depicted is of the second kind. It may, I think, be useful to correct a mistake in the catalogue which might otherwise find its way into future books on dancing. The authors (p. 33) make a Chinese writer say that the dancers "struck the drum with their feet to mark the tempo." This should be "followed the drum to get their tempo."

In Plate 2 you will see (as in several other reliefs) the game of *liu-po* being played. This was a kind of backgammon. In the foreground, between the two players, are the six sticks thrown down as we throw dice, and used for the same purpose. The player on the left has his mouth open; he is shouting instructions to the sticks. This shouting of gamblers, in the excitement of the game, is often mentioned in Chinese literature. In the background, between the two partners of the players, is the backgammon board with two counters lying upon it. The partner on the right has his hand raised, ready to make the "move" to which the throw of the sticks entitles him. I explain all this because the catalogue does not make it clear what is happening, and refers to the actual backgammon board simply as a "low table." We happen to possess a catalogue of the pastimes in-

dulged in by a young man-about-town (c. A.D. 136). *Liu-po* comes high on the list, and it may be of some interest to mention his other distractions, which were: tug-of-war, tiddly-winks, *ko-wu* (a kind of halma?), football, *i-ch'ien* (guessing where a coin has been hidden?), falconry, hunting with hounds, horse-racing and cock-fighting. Falconry seems to have been introduced to China, possibly from Central Asia, about the first century A.D.

Plate 3 is from the tomb of a man who was buried in A.D. 212. The catalogue describes the figure on the left as a winged divinity, and may well be right; but the "wing" looks more like flying drapery. The inscription merely gives the man's name and the dates of his death and burial, along with his title, *Shang-chi-li*. The catalogue translates this title as "Steward of Accounts." This gives no inkling of a *Shang-chi-li's* actual duties. To understand what these duties were gives us considerable further insight into the bureaucratic life of the times and the haphazard way in which the whole system was built up. So, as a supplement to what I have already said about Han officials, I will add a rather detailed account of the *Shang-chi-li's* strangely varied functions. The name means "official who brings up statistics." Originally provincial governors came to the capital at the end of each year to present the census figures, showing what taxation was due. But, as China grew larger, this became impracticable and they took to sending a deputy. Confucius, we are told, bowed when he met a census-bearer, remembering (what modern statisticians sometimes forget) that statistics mean human lives. Thus, though the office was not a high one, the census-bearer was looked upon with great respect, and during the Han dynasty was entrusted with a curious medley of responsibilities. Someone had to look after the candidates sent up to the capital as suitable for high employment. It fell to the census-bearer to conduct them, and they came to be known as the "companions of the census-bearer." The census-bearers were also used as informants about conditions in the provinces they came from and in those through which they passed. About A.D. 130 we find a census-bearer reporting on conversations he has had with peasants and their wives while on his way to the capital. At one time they

were generally given sinecures at Court and remained at the capital. But about A.D. 160, as the result of an economy drive, this practice was stopped.

A shooting and rice-planting scene is taken from a photograph and not (as is the case with other plates) from a rubbing. One wishes that it had been possible to use more photographs ; for though the blurb describes rubbing (i.e., ink-squeeze) as a facsimile process, it in fact often extremely distorting. In the bird-shooting scene I take the small bell-like objects to the left of the bowman to be spools on which are wound the thread (*tseng*) often attached to arrows in order to facilitate the finding of the game when it fell into the water or into long grass. The thread is actually seen issuing from the spool under the elbow of the bowman on the right. In the agricultural scene below two men with scythes standing in the water of the inundated rice-field are hacking at the roots of the weeds that have grown up since the rice was sown. "When the shoots are seven or eight inches long," says an early work on agriculture, "the old weeds will have sprung up again. You must plunge your scythe into the water and hack them at the roots, then they will all rot and die." Three men, also standing in the water, are pulling out the shoots for re-planting. The figure on the extreme left is carrying away bundles of shoots to be re-planted. His little basket may contain straw or bast used for tying up the small bundles. The catalogue describes all five workers as "harvesting." But (to mention only one reason why this is unlikely) harvesting of rice is done with a short-handled sickle, not with a scythe, and with a much less violent and aggressive mode of action. But I am not an expert in agricultural history, and I hope someone better qualified will check my surmises.

Plate 4 is the village constable. He is acting as a guardian of the tomb-door ; and to frighten away intruders, human or demonic, he has at his belt a placard inscribed "arrested according to the terms of the Edict." Han law was of two kinds ; the permanent code of the dynasty and Imperial Edicts issued as occasion arose. The only Edict I know of which dealt with tomb-violation concerns an interesting case. A robber broke into a tomb. The occupant, newly interred, was in fact not dead, but only unconscious. The intrusion brought him to his

senses and with great presence of mind he at once took the robber's name and address and subsequently brought a case against him. As the result of the robber's action had been good, though his intention was bad, the local authorities were not sure how they ought to deal with him. The case was referred to the capital and eventually a Decree ordained that the man was to receive three hundred strokes of the bamboo. The normal punishment for tomb-breaking was death. It is possible that the placard in our picture was a kind of warrant, intended to be fixed to the offender's back after arrest.

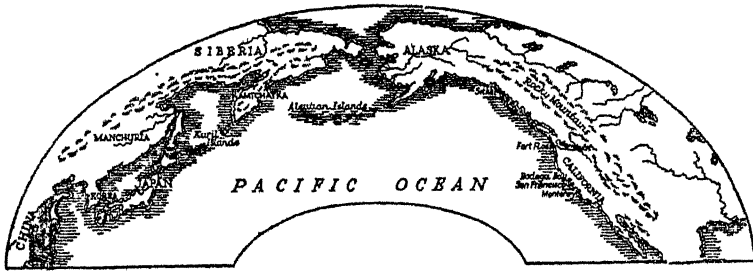
In the above brief notes I have left whole departments of activity unmentioned. I have, for example, said nothing about Chinese conquests in Central Asia, or about medicine, lexicography, mathematics or other technical subjects. Nor have I attempted to deal with the poetry of the period, which may be studied in many translations, for example, those on pp. 48-78 of my *Chinese Poems*, 1946. To this period, it may be noted, belongs *The Bones of Chuang Tzu*, to my mind the finest of all long Chinese poems. Still less have I attempted to give even a sketch of the political history of the period. Despite these and many other omissions I hope I have done something towards giving "the feel" of life in Latter Han times.

# RUSSIA IN CALIFORNIA

by George Edinger

THE PERIOD OF RUSSIAN RULE in California has almost been forgotten ; but, though nothing survives of the little fortress that once commanded a river flowing out into Bodega Bay, they call it Russian river still. In fact, the first Europeans to foresee the possibilities of California were Russians, who came across Siberia, felt their way down the Pacific coast in *shitiki*—sewn ships of pine logs lashed to boards and caulked with moss—and by the middle of the eighteenth century had started hunting sea otters for their skins in San Francisco Bay. Sometimes they wintered ashore. But these pioneers, the Promyshleniks, were lone venturers. They had no government behind them : Moscow remained unconscious or indifferent. On the Spanish viceroys in Mexico, however, the roving of the Promyshleniks had a different impact. True, they were individual adventurers. But such adventurers may found an empire. A Russian California would bar the advance of the Spanish American Empire, and might even push it back to the isthmus of Panama. To forestall the Russians, therefore, Spain moved into California and founded here first colony at San Diego in 1769.

Russia was slow to reply. Her Empire was vast, and California lay beyond its remotest boundaries. Besides, the Spaniards were hard put to maintain their settlements, and Russia could afford to wait. The first counter move was the formation of a Russian America Company in 1799, with headquarters on Sitka Island off the Alaska coast. The new company, which absorbed and co-ordinated the ventures of the old Promyshleniks, had Imperial backing ; and the Czar took up a block of shares. Even so, Russian America might have been confined to the mainland of Alaska but for the energy of the Company's Governor on Sitka Island. Compact, bald-headed, fired with



the restless dynamism that often flares up in men of Russian race, Prince Baranov determined from his first appointment to build a Russian Empire in California. The Promyshleniks had brought him tales of sunny lands lying far to the south, and he passed them on to the Company at Petersburg with urgent pleas for ships and men. But the Company, already doing very well out of Sitka, were not enthusiastic. In 1800 sea-otter pelts fetched £50 apiece at the great fair in Nijni Novgorod ; and, though at Sitka the men were living on eagles and sea lions, and Baranov warned the directors that without a supply base his colony would starve, the Company had its own ideas about the desirability of expansion.

In 1805, they sent a mission to Japan ; and with it sailed Count Nicolai Rezanov, a widower at forty, but still a giant cast in the Baranov mould. Court Chamberlain to the Czar, he felt confident that Russian power would achieve what Admiral Perry's squadron was to accomplish fifty years later, and break all barriers against foreign trade. But Japan remained obdurate ; and when, in the late autumn of 1805, Rezanov put into Sitka Sound, his hopes disappointed and his mission unfulfilled, Prince Baranov talked to him of Californian prospects, Nicolai Rezanov needed little persuasion. He had experienced the hardships of life on Sitka ; he was eager to retrieve a reputation shattered by his failure in Japan ; and, as the brig *Juno* was fit to sail, Rezanov set out in her for San Francisco. His mission was purposely vague. Rezanov knew neither the strength of the Spanish garrison, nor the possibili-

ties of a Californian market. He had certainly learned that all trade with the Spanish Empire was confined to Spanish subjects ; but he hoped to overawe the settlers with the *Juno's* guns, perhaps even to make a landing immediately north of San Francisco Bay.

During the voyage his ambitions faded. Fogbound, becalmed, then tempest tossed, the *Juno* took seven months to sail to San Francisco from Sitka Sound ; and, before she reached her destination, half her crew had died of scurvy. Limping to harbour in April 1806, the Russian expedition came in no state to overawe the Spaniards. But Rezanov met the situation with superb address. "Weigh anchor," signalled Fort San Joaquin at the harbour mouth. Answering with a confused flutter of signal flags, the *Juno* continued to sail on. Finally she signalled compliance and anchored. But by this time she was past the range of the fortress' artillery. A shore party, twenty strong, thereupon put off in a ship's boat, Rezanov resplendent in gold and green, officers and sailors in uniforms carefully preserved for such an occasion. As it happened, the Spaniards were in an equally weak state, since, apart from the gunners at Fort Joaquin they commanded no forces, and had no ship-of-war to match the *Juno*. But the Spaniards, too, were masters of pretence ; and Don Luis Arguello, Commander of the port, received his awkward visitors on the quay with a suite of thirty, bravely plumed, their swords and pistols embossed with silver from the mines of Mexico. Rezanov having proclaimed his peaceful mission from the Czar of all the Russias, Arguello announced wholehearted welcome in the name of his king. As neither could understand a word of the other's language, these courtesies were wasted. For a moment Rezanov faced Arguello baffled. Then the humour of the situation overcame them, and both men burst out laughing.

At length a certain Father Uria, a friar from the mission the Franciscans had founded, stumbled on the solution of the language difficulty. He spoke some sentences of Latin, which a member of the Russian party, Dr. Langsdorff, a German naturalist who had shipped with Rezanov to write his observations on the life, the climate and the prospects of San



Francisco, understood and was able to answer. And so the awkward negotiations began. Rezanov expatiated on the cargo that his ship had brought—furs and fabrics and semi-precious stones. For this fine merchandise he wanted only corn and fruit and meat to feed the *Juno's* crew. Naturally Arguello temporized. He had no authority, he said, to deal with Rezanov ; that was a matter for the Governor of California and not the Commandant of San Francisco. He would be honoured, nevertheless, if the company dined with him. Spanish hospitality in the New World at the beginning of the nineteenth century was lavish but incongruous. The party ate off silver plate, but sat on the floor on rugs woven by the Indians. There were fifteen children in the Arguello family, and the youngest daughter, Concepcion, was seated next to Rezanov.

The outcome is not surprising. The sixteen-year-old girl, who had never left a lonely settlement, was deeply excited by the coming of such a man as Rezanov, by the tales he told and by the giant figure of the Czar's Court Chamberlain in his splendid uniform : while the middle-aged diplomatist warmed to her interest and sympathy. The friendship that sprung up between them ended with their engagement. Every day that the *Juno* lay off San Francisco, Nicolai Rezanov visited Concepcion Arguello, made her gifts of semi-precious stones and recounted the story of his triumphs and his failures. Some American historians suggest that Rezanov was merely anxious to gain the support of Concepcion's father ; but all the evidence points the other way. Besides, Rezanov must have known that Arguello could not help him. When Arrilaga, the Governor of California, came down from Monterey, his capital, the attitude he adopted was wholly unco-operative. He had definite orders from Madrid ; there was to be no trade with foreign ships. Arrilaga was upright, fearless and incorruptible ; but the colonists ignored his veto. They were eager to buy the fine Orenburg cloth, the furs and sables, the embroidered coats that the Russians had brought ; and the Russians were desperate for supplies of corn and fresh fruit. " Out of humanity " Arrilaga agreed to sell them corn for cash ; but, when he had retired, the Franciscans began to act as intermediaries and unofficial bargains were soon struck. If Arrilaga wished the *Juno*

were gone, so did Davidyov, her Captain. His chief was making foolish love to a young girl ; his men were corrupted by the lazy Californian life. A friendliness that authority could not quite approve had sprung up between the two races ; and at night staccato notes of Russian balalaikas alternated with the melody of the Spanish guitars, as Spaniards learnt to dance the Kazachak, and Russians the Borrego.

But there were many who did not wish to end the episode : Rezanov, unwilling to leave Concepcion ; Arguello, less scrupulous than his superior, who found the trading profitable ; the Franciscan monks who enjoyed their rôle as intermediaries. And secretly Rezanov hoped for a Russian squadron to seize San Francisco, whereas Arguello believed a Spanish ship-of-war might put in and take the *Juno* as a prize. But they could not wait forever. Rezanov persisted in his efforts to induce the Franciscans to sanction his engagement to Concepcion. Once they had agreed to overlook the fact that he was a schismatic, and had assured him that only a Papal dispensation would be needed, he made light of every obstacle. Back in Moscow he would ask his master, Alexander I, to send him on a special mission to Madrid. There he would achieve both the objects he sought—sanction to marry Concepcion and a Russian California. The brig sailed at the end of June. On the quay, Rezanov wrapped Concepcion in a shawl of Brussels lace and assured her of his swift return.

He did not reach Madrid. He did not even reach Moscow. At Sitka Island he fell sick, and Baranov urged him to rest. But Rezanov would not rest ; and through the bitter cold of the Siberian winter his sledge pushed on from posting house to posting house. But in the sledge there sat a dying man. At Krasnoyarsk his strength collapsed ; and there, on June 1st 1807, Count Nicolai Rezanov died. Concepcion Arguello awaited him year after year ; and, though the Franciscans released her from her marriage vow, she rebuffed all suitors ; till, abandoning hope, she eventually took the veil. Since Rezanov had failed to mention her in his report to Baranov, she received no news from Sitka. Her thirty-five years' constancy became a Californian legend. At last, in 1840, the commander of a British warship, Vice-Admiral Simpson,

put into San Francisco and asked to be allowed to visit Concepcion in her convent. From him she heard of Rezanov's death ; and it seems that she did not show surprise ; for she had felt certain that only an accident could have prevented him writing to her.

The death of Nicolai Rezanov did not bring to an end Russia's designs on California. It was an epic beginning. Rezanov's report to Baranov, backed by Langsdorff's account of the country and the weakness of the Spaniards, stirred Czar Alexander I and the Russian America Company ; and in February 1811 the frigate *Cherikoff*, commanded by Captain Kuskov, set out to find a site for Russia's first Californian colony. After forty years, the answer had come to Spanish settlement at San Diego. Kuskov chose a site eighteen miles up river from Bodega Bay, forty miles from San Francisco ; whereat Arguello, now Governor of California, smarting perhaps under the insult Rezanov seemed to have inflicted on his family, lodged an immediate protest and banned all dealings with the Russians, though from Arrilaga's experience he might have known such an order would be ignored. Neither the Spaniards nor the Indians were deterred from dealing with the new colony, at Fort Ross. Kuskov cared for it least of all, since in 1809, there was only one fleet in the Pacific, and that fleet was Russian. Thus the colony grew. On a bluff above a river, surrounded by a stockade, its buildings clustered under the gilt bulbous dome of an Orthodox Church. Outside the stockade, Aleuts and Californian Indians had their huts. Beyond the town stretched corn and pasture lands. Awkwardly enough for Arguello, the Californian Indians preferred the Russians to the Spaniards. They had never seen white men like these who refrained from ruling their lives or attempting to discipline their religious beliefs. But Fort Ross did not pay, possibly because it fed Sitka. It was, indeed, a heavy expense to the Company, costing 13,000 roubles to maintain, and only yielding 5,000 roubles profit in a lucky year.

Such considerations did not daunt Kuskov. Still less did they dismay his Lieutenant, Zavalashin. For Zavalashin had seen the chance to build a Californian Empire. All lands north of San Francisco should be Russian ; and every legal sanction

that he could procure for his grand project was set down on parchment, and filed and forwarded to Baranov. Indian chieftains had affixed their marks to a document that placed eight hundred miles of Californian coast under the protection of the Russian Czar. The hinterland was not defined : it had not yet been explored. Even the title to the seashore was dubious ; it is unlikely that the Indians understood what they were signing, and still more unlikely that they had either power or authority to make so vast a grant. But empires have been based on less. And circumstances helped the Russians, who were to outlast their Spanish rivals.

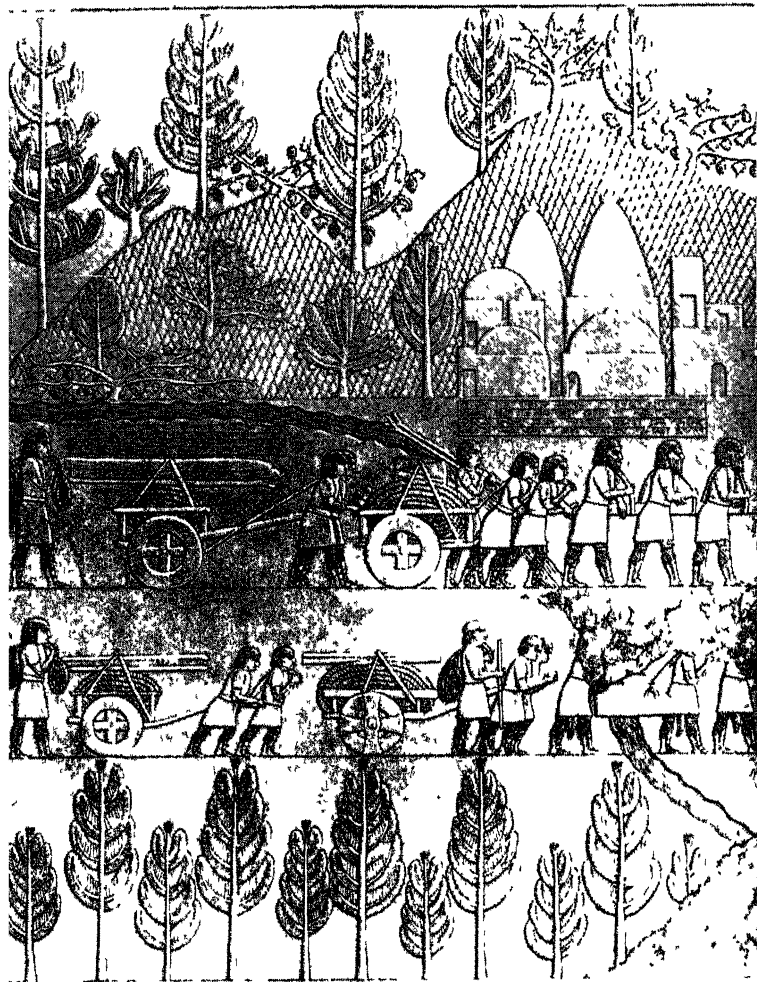
When Mexican independence was proclaimed in 1823, Iturbide, first Emperor of Mexico, showed no great interest in California north of San Francisco Bay. But he saw the need of keeping his Empire together ; and, even in 1823, the westward trail from the United States had become a real threat. A great European Power upon his northern frontier would have suited Iturbide very well. Russia was to be his shield ; and, without exacting conditions, he offered to confirm the Indian grant. Alexander I had previously hesitated. Won over to the Californian project at last, he still insisted on caution ; for he was not anxious that California should involve him in a war with Spain. But, once there was no Spanish power in California, there was no bar to Russian settlement. On the contrary, there were considerable incentives. Only labour was lacking, and Kuskov began to study the scheme that Rezanov had sent to Moscow. It was not impracticable, and it was economic. Twenty years later American prospectors adopted it. Rezanov was the first to see the benefits of bringing in Chinese labour.

This was the climax of Russia's Californian projects ; the dreams of Baranov and Rezanov and Zavalashin were realized ; and by 1824 Russia was master of North California both in law and fact. But, as Czarist Russians used to observe, heaven was high and the Emperor far away. Had Baranov been at Fort Ross, the Pacific seaboard of America might have had a vastly different destiny. True, there was Zavalashin ; but Zavalashin was a junior officer, and the enthusiasm he showed began to frighten Kuskov. A dutiful official awaiting orders, Kuskov played for safety. Zavalashin was a dreamer in a hurry. Worse

still, he was contaminated by the reformist doctrines that were sweeping Russia in the eighteen-twenties—ideas which the Emperor had favoured seven years earlier, but which, subsequently, he had come to dread. Was he right, Captain Kuskov wondered, to treat with a power that had rebelled against its legitimate sovereign? His doubts were not allayed by Zavalashin's zeal ; and he gave a non-committal answer to the Emperor Iturbide and forwarded his offer to Prince Baranov. But Baranov was growing tired and California now seemed far distant. He had his supply base at Fort Ross. The dream of his imperial aggrandisement had long ceased to fire his ageing brain. He still remembered Rezanov, the man who had been in a hurry. Rezanov had been his friend. Somehow, in his mind the vision of a Californian Empire was linked with Rezanov's tragic death. Thus, although he reported Iturbide's offer to the Imperial Chancellery, he did not recommend it with his old fire. It is doubtful if Czar Alexander ever saw the offer ; and Alexander was a prey now to those strange absent moods that foreboded his equivocal end. St. Petersburg was restive with the new Reformist movement. Californian plans must wait. In 1825 Czar Alexander died or disappeared. That December the Reformists struck in vain. Zavalashin was thrown into the Peter and Paul fortress. His fate entailed the annihilation of the schemes he had been harbouring.

The new Czar, Nicholas I, had no doubts about California. The place was contaminated by rebel Mexicans who had ousted their rightful king ; the project linked with dangerous lunatics like Zavalashin. Holy Russia must not touch it. The orders that came to Fort Ross was unequivocal. The place was to continue to supply the colonists on Sitka ; but Russian settlement was not to be expanded. Fort Ross had the choice of expanding or decaying. Till 1841 the Imperial Eagle and the Greek Cross still floated on the bluff above the Russian river ; but that year it became too costly to maintain and was sold to a romantic Swiss adventurer, Johannes Sutter, for thirty thousand dollars. The Russians had made a poor bargain. At thirty thousand dollars, two thousand cattle, two thousand sheep and horses, the mills and factories and houses were cheap. But there were greater treasures there than Rezanov had

imagined. Russia sold Alaska some years before the gold rush ; and in California her Empire ended when the great discovery was even nearer at hand. Gold was first struck at Sutter's mill-stream in the year 1848. In 1954 a Russian California might change the prospects of the world.



*From "Monuments of Ninveh II" by A. H. Layard*  
WORKMEN WITH INSTRUMENTS FOR MOVING A WINGED BULL

# SENNACHERIB'S EXPERIMENT : COTTON REACHES THE WEST

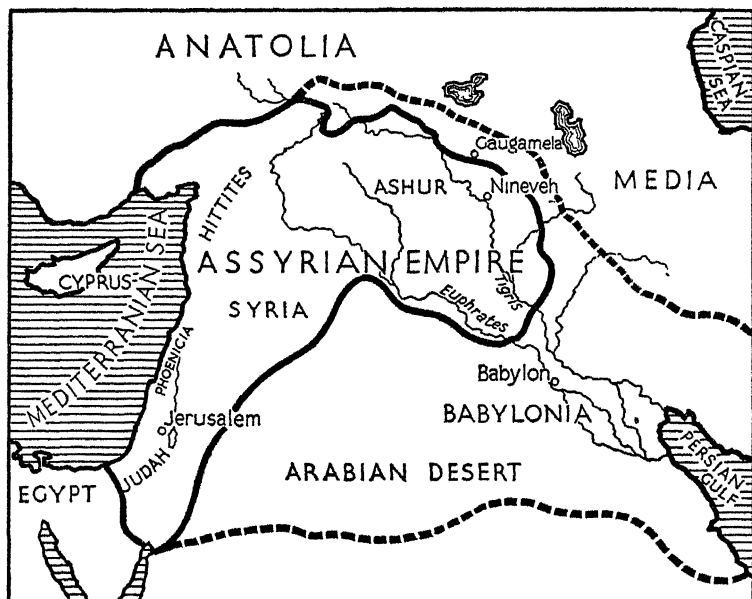
by G. Goossens

AT THE END OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY B.C., when the Assyrian Empire ranged from Iran to Egypt and from Anatolia to Babylon, while Greek colonization had just encircled the Mediterranean, and Rome was slowly emerging as a small city-state, the hegemony of civilization was about to pass from East to West. The Assyrian Empire was then at its height, and with complacency King Sargon (721-705 B.C.) enumerated his titles and the countries over which he claimed dominion : "Sargon, the great king, the mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, viceroy of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad [Babylonia]; the king who, with the help of Ashur, Nabû and Marduk, beginning with Iatnana [Cyprus] which is in the midst of the sea of the setting sun, to the border of Egypt and the land of Mushki [Phrygia], the wide land of Amurru [Syria], Khatti in its entirety [Western Anatolia], all of Gutium, the distant Medes on the edge of the Bikni Mountains [Demavend?], the land of Ellipi and Râshi which are on the Elamite border, all of the Arameans who live on the banks of the Tigris, Surappi and Uknû rivers, all of the Sutû, desert folk, of Iatburu, all there were, the city of Till-Khumba which belongs to the Elamite territory, Babylonia north and south, all of Chaldea's cities, as many as there were, the land of Bit-Iakin on the shore of the Bitter Sea as far as Dilmun's border [Bahrein], the king who brought all these under one rule and set his officials over them as governors, and who imposed upon them the yoke of his sovereignty."<sup>1</sup>

No doubt the king was delighted by this recital of his dignities, and perhaps even the scribes themselves fell under the spell of the resounding titles they recorded. Sophisticated

<sup>1</sup> D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria* II (Chicago 1927), sect. 96.





Map by S. H. Perrin.

The Assyrian Empire at the accession of Sargon, 721 B.C., the dotted line marks acquisitions up to the death of Assurbanipal, 631 B.C.

readers of the twentieth century, remembering the barbarous methods by which the Assyrian kings had united Western Asia, may be less enraptured. But ruthless conquest does not preclude a high intellectual culture; and culture was not lacking among Assyrians of the period. Here, for instance, is the evidence of Assurbanipal (668-631 B.C.):

"For a distance of a month of twenty-five days' journey (he declares) I devastated the provinces of Elam. Salt and cress I scattered over them . . . The noise of people, the tread of cattle and sheep, the glad shouts of rejoicing, I banished from its fields. Wild asses, gazelles and all kinds of beasts of the plain, I caused to lie down among them, as if at home."<sup>2</sup>

Yet, at the same time, Assurbanipal collected at Nineveh some of the largest libraries of the Ancient World; and this was a deliberate policy, for the king who boasted of his sava-

<sup>2</sup> D. D. Luckenbill, sect 811.

gery was equally proud of his learning and considered it the most distinctive feature of his personality :

"Marduk, master of the gods, granted me as a gift a receptive mind and ample power of thought. Nabû, the universal scribe, made me a present of his wisdom. Ninurta and Nergal endowed my body with strength, vigour, and unrivalled power. The art of Master Adapa I learned, the hidden treasure of all scribal knowledge, the signs of heaven and earth . . . I have studied the heavens with the learned masters of oil divination, I have solved the laborious problems of division and multiplication, which were not clear, I have read the artistic script of Sumer and the dark Akkadian, which is hard to master, now taking pleasure in the reading of stones coming from before the flood, now being angered because I was stupid and addled by the beautiful script."<sup>3</sup>

Such was the complexity of the Assyrian mind. Assyrian kings were not those solemn and portentous figures one might assume from studying their reliefs : they were individuals who, besides their activity in war, gave a characteristic impulse to their internal policy. Just as Assurbanipal collected books, organized libraries and boasted of his learning in his inscriptions, his grandfather Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) had favoured agriculture and engineering and had glorified the technical progress of his age. This is the actual record of his reign : "That I might accomplish the construction of my palace . . . at that time, Ashur and Ishtar . . . showed me how to bring out the mighty cedar logs which had grown large in the days gone by . . . in the mountains of Sirara. Alabaster which in the days of the kings, my fathers, was precious enough for inlaying the hilt of a sword, they disclosed to me in the darkness of Mount Ammanana [Anti-Lebanon]. And breccia for all kinds of great jars, such as had never been seen before . . . on the border of Til-Barsip [in North Syria] disclosed itself. Near Nineveh, in the land of Balatai, by decree of the gods, white limestone was found in abundance . . . The bull and cow-colossi of white limestone, with Ninkurra's help, I had fashioned, in the land of Balatai, and made complete as to their members.

<sup>3</sup> D. D. Luckenbill, *sect. 986*.

"In time past, when the kings, my fathers, fashioned a bronze image in the likeness of their members, to set up in their temples, the labour on them exhausted every workman ; in their ignorance and lack of knowledge, they drank oil, and wore sheepskins to carry on the work they wanted to do in the midst of their mountains. But I, Sennacherib, first among all princes, wise in all craftsmanship, set up great pillars of bronze, colossal lions, open at the knees, which no king before my time had fashioned, through the clever understanding which the noble Nin-igi-kug [=Ea, god of wisdom] had given me, and in my own wisdom, I pondered deeply the matter of carrying out that task. Following the advice of my head and the prompting of my heart, I fashioned a work of bronze and cunningly wrought it . . . At the command of the god, I built a form of clay and poured bronze into it, as in making half-shekel pieces, and finished their construction . . .

"That daily there might be abundant flow of water of the buckets, I had copper cables and pails made, and in place of the [mud brick] pedestals I set up great posts and crossbeams over the wells . . . A great park, like unto Mount Amanus, wherein all kinds of herbs and fruit trees, trees such as grow on the mountains and in Chaldea, as well as trees bearing wool, were set out, I planted by the palace's side . . . The area of Nineveh, my royal city, I enlarged . . . Above the city and below the city I laid out parks. The wealth of mountains and of all lands . . . herbs and fruit-bearing trees I set out for my subjects. The river Khusur, whose waters from of old took a low level and none among the kings, my fathers, had dammed them as they poured into the Tigris ; to increase the productiveness of the cultivable fields, from the border of the city of Kisiri, through the high and low ground I dug with pick-axes, I ran a canal ; those waters I brought across the plain round Nineveh, and made them flow through the orchards in irrigation ditches . . . At the head of the cities of Dûr-Ishtar, Shibaniba and Suli, I saw pools and enlarged their narrow springs and turned them into a reservoir. To give these waters a course through the steep mountains, I cut through the difficult places with pickaxes and directed their outflow on to the plain of Nineveh. I strengthened their channels, heaping up

their banks mountain high, and brought those waters into them. Following my plan, I added them to the Khusur's waters forever. I had all of the orchards watered in the hot season. In winter, a thousand fields of alluvium, about and below the city, I had them watered every year. To arrest the flow of these waters, I made a swamp and set out a cane-brake within it. Igiru-birds, wild swine, beasts of the forest, I turned loose therein. By command of the god, within the orchards, more than in their native habitat, the vine, every fruit-bearing tree, and herbs thrived luxuriously . . . The mulberry and the cypress, the product of the orchards, the reeds of the brakes which were in the swamp, I cut down and used them as desired, in the building of my royal palaces. The wool-bearing trees they sheared and wove the wool into garments."<sup>4</sup>

In the Assyrian Annals usually devoted to the campaigns of the kings, their hunting records and their building activities this text stands alone. After the relation of his wars, Sennacherib enlarges upon the technical achievements of his reign ; and we might summarize his assertions as follows : new quarries were found and the casting of bronze for the first time accomplished on a large scale—he alludes possibly to the *cire-perdue* process : the *shaduf*, or counterpoised hoist for raising water, still used in the Middle East, was introduced : an aqueduct was built and irrigation reorganized ; new plants were cultivated. These are no idle boasts, for there is no mention of the *shaduf* in earlier Assyrian texts, and the aqueduct, excavated by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago at Jerwan, is the earliest known structure of its kind. The most startling item in the list is the mention of wool-bearing trees, which can only mean cotton plants. These were planted at two places ; first, at the royal gardens in Nineveh ; next, in the fields along an irrigation canal which we know followed a small river running past the modern village of Bahzani, whose dam was investigated by the late R. Campbell Thompson. One might imagine that the first were nothing but curiosities in a botanical garden. But this was clearly not true

<sup>4</sup> D. D. Luckenbill, sects. 390, 391, 393, 395, 399-400, 401.

of the last, as garments were woven: cotton, in short, had thus been introduced as a utility plant. We know when it was introduced as Annal-texts are dated. There is no mention of cotton plants in editions as late as 700 B.C. The text which has been quoted is dated 694 B.C. Since cotton was at that time already woven, the plant must have been introduced in Assyria about 699 B.C. Whence did Sennacherib get his cotton-plants? The nearest place where cotton grew in antiquity was the Bahrein Islands, Dilmun in our texts. Embassies from these islands reached Sennacherib as they had reached his father Sargon; and if cotton was included in the gifts this should solve our problem—though no detailed account exists.

Not only did Sennacherib in the Annals of his reign include his technical and agricultural achievements, he ordered that they should be represented on the reliefs of the state-court of his palace. Part of these reliefs are preserved in the British Museum, the remainder being known from the publications of Sir Henry Layard. We see how the building-platform was raised, how the colossi were dragged across the hills; but we notice also, in the lower register of a relief, the *shadufs* and, on the upper register, all kinds of animals and plants mentioned in the Annals. It would be tempting to look for representations of cotton-plants next to the cane-brakes, among the cypresses and the pomegranate-trees; but, owing to a conventionality of draughtsmanship on the part of the Assyrian artists—or of those of Sir Henry Layard—we cannot be sure of their identity.

Years passed by. There is no other mention of cotton in Assyrian texts. Progress, it may be, was taken for granted by the scribes, who, furthermore, were influenced in their record of noteworthy deeds by the taste of their royal masters, the superstitious and portent-fearing Esarhaddon and that learned sportsman, Assurbanipal. At the latter's death, his Empire collapsed; the Assyrian homeland held on for some years until Medes and Babylonians stormed its chief cities, Ashur in 614, Nineveh in 612 B.C. Total destruction fell on Assyria, and, as a result of the disintegration of the state, irrigation was ruined. Some agricultural life continued in the hills; but, along the Tigris, life was reduced to a level it had not known

since prehistoric times. Assyria became a backward country and disappeared from history.

Only by chance do we hear of this country again. The Tenthousand marched along the Tigris in October 401 B.C.; and Xenophon writes of the poverty of the small peasant communities whom they encountered. At the end of September 331 B.C., Darius III, King of Persia, decided to oppose Alexander the Great in the Assyrian foothills, and so the curtain lifts again. For a few days, mighty armies were arrayed in Assyria, to the north of Nineveh. The battle of Gaugamela was fought and won by Alexander, the decisive event in his Asian conquests; and historians, who describe the battle, give us an incidental glimpse of the condition of the country. Darius had drawn his battle-line at Gaugamela—the modern Tell Gomel—a little more than 20 miles to the north-east of Nineveh. Alexander's army, coming from Syria, followed the left bank of the Tigris, camped in the neighbourhood of Nineveh, whose ruins Alexander visited, then marched towards the enemy which it encountered after crossing some hills—the Jebel Maqlub. Consulting the map, we see that the Macedonian army crossed the very fields where Sennacherib had grown cotton three centuries and a half earlier. In September, cotton-plants should be blossoming; and, had Sennacherib's fields survived, there ought to be a mention of them, especially as the Greeks did not know the plant, and scholars accompanying the expedition noted greedily all new facts. We think, for instance, of Aristotle's nephew, Callisthenes, who informed his uncle of discoveries made on the way and, a week after the battle of Gaugamela, sent from Babylon a report on the state of astronomy in that country. But, when the same men who had crossed the fields of Assyria came to the valley of the Indus in 326 B.C.—Callisthenes in the meantime had been executed—they were astonished to discover wool-bearing trees, i.e. cotton-plants: and Theophrastes, who used Aristotle's documentation in his work on *Plants*, knew of no other. Clearly, had Sennacherib's cotton-trees still been growing in Assyria, we should have learned it; in fact, no trace of them remained. This explains why the introduction of cotton was so slow in the ancient world. Greeks in the fifth century

B.C. had heard from Egypt about cotton in Nubia, from Babylonia and Persia about cotton in India ; but, if they had some knowledge of woven cotton garments, they had no idea of the plant itself. Had the Assyrian Empire survived a few years more, cotton would have been known centuries earlier in the West. The failure of Sennacherib's attempt was due to the early disintegration of the Assyrian Empire, followed by the collapse of agricultural life in the Tigris valley after the fall of Nineveh. When we draw up the balance-sheet of Assyria, we should take such facts into account. The fall of Assyria was a disaster for world civilization. It happened a few years too early, at a moment when the Greeks were not yet ready to take over the inheritance.

# AGOBARD OF LYONS

by Allen Cabaniss

TODAY MANY OF US THINK, as did the comforters of the Patriarch Job, that verily we "are the people and wisdom will perish" with us. It is even more likely, as a modern commentator has observed, that we believe that wisdom (and other values) began with us. This is especially true of our attitude towards such a virtue as freedom of thought and expression: if it is not peculiar to our times, we say, only the Greeks of Plato's day offer any vital comparison. But let us see for ourselves; let us plunge into the midst of an era more than a thousand years before our own period and more than a thousand years after the ancient Greeks. A grim story out of the fatal year 810 will serve to introduce our inquiry. The year was ominously marked by two eclipses of the sun and two of the moon, all visible in Frankland, all evoking superstitious manifestations among the masses and striking fear even in the heart of the great Emperor Charles. Moreover, two of his three legitimate sons and his eldest daughter died: Einhard, his biographer, says that in spite of the stoutness of his heart, the ruler gave vent to his grief in tears. Another death duly reported by the annalists was that of the famous elephant, Abulabaz, which had been a part of the royal menage for eight years, ever since the Caliph Haroun al Rashid had sent it to Charles. And Grimoald II, duke of Beneventum, was in revolt. To heighten the sense of disaster, a pestilential murrain destroyed vast herds of cattle in all the provinces of the Carolingian state.

Our story concerns that plague. In the district and diocese of Lyons, near the confluence of the Rhone and Saône rivers, a curious explanation of this loss of cattle gained currency. It was rumoured that the duke of Beneventum, the Emperor's enemy, had secretly sent emissaries throughout Gaul to scatter on every field, hillside, meadow, and spring a certain kind of dust which



would poison the Frankish cattle. Mob-spirit rose high and a search was instituted for the crafty spies. Many men fell into the hands of suspicious hunters. Some of the victims were slain immediately on capture ; others were seized and given the semblance of a trial. Under questioning, torture, or the threat of death, many of them admitted that they did have dust in their possession and that they did scatter it. These were placarded with a statement of their offence, bound hand and foot, and thrown into the Rhone or Saône, where they drowned—a hideous variation of the ordeal by cold water. The country-bishop (*chorepiscopus*) of the diocese, Agobard, relates that he actually saw much of this as it occurred, and heard of other instances. Promptly using his influence to put an end to it, he intimated to his hearers that it was unreasonable for the dust to kill cattle only and not other animals. He further suggested that there were not enough Beneventans, men, women, and children, armed with cartloads of poisoned dust, to accomplish such widespread mischief. As for the extorted confessions of guilt, he expressed his conviction that they were but the work of the old Deceiver of the human race. By dint of patient reasoning and pleading, he was successful in halting the outrages.

The strange story raises several interesting questions. How did so many people, who obviously included the humbler folk, come to know about a relatively obscure and minor struggle between their Emperor Charles and the ruler of a small duchy in the southern part of the Italian peninsula? How quickly and how extensively was news disseminated in the first decade of the ninth century? Was the rumour of black magic a piece of official propaganda to rally popular opinion to the support of governmental policy? How important was general public opinion at that time? Did Bishop Agobard, by opposing the malevolent action, incur imperial disfavour? Who were the unfortunate wretches who suffered the persecution? How was it that a minor clergyman was able, by a sane, rational appeal, to quell a mob and bring the people to their senses? One day, two years later, Agobard was making the rounds of the diocese, when he came by chance upon a group of men about to lynch four persons bound in fetters, one of them a woman. In response to his inquiry, a fantastic story was related to him.

There was a far-away land called Magonia, from which came cloud-borne ships navigated by aerial sailors, who were in collusion with certain mortals having the mysterious power of controlling the weather. The former paid the latter to raise hailstorms and tempests that would beat the fruit from the trees and the grain from the stalks. The crew then loaded the ships with the crops thus harvested and sailed back to Magonia. The men and the woman in chains were supposed to have fallen from one of these sky-vessels several days before. After much reasoning, Agobard reports, he was able to allay the threat of violence and to confound those who had caught the wretched prisoners.

These incidents bring to attention a remarkable man, Agobard (769-840), Spanish by birth, who became bishop of Lyons in 816, the very year in which Louis the Pious, son and heir of Charlemagne, received papal consecration as emperor of Frankland and the West. Except for three years of exile (834-838), Agobard ruled his diocese for the next quarter of a century, until that sorrowful, beautiful June of 840 when both he and his liege lord died within two weeks of each other. These years were a time of strife and trouble, and the bishop's life and works faithfully reflect every aspect of the age. Indeed, through his eyes we obtain a first-hand glimpse of the ninth century. The vast empire of the mighty Charlemagne had fallen into the hands of a man infinitely less capable. Louis's two titles are indicative both of his nature and of his reign. "The Pious," we and the Germans call him, remembering his deference to ecclesiastical authority and that earnest severity which never allowed him to laugh or smile. But perhaps the French are more accurate in designating him "the Debonair," the changeable, unstable, wavering one, who listened well but not wisely to the promptings of his young, attractive, persuasive second wife, Empress Judith. With the first decade of his rule, both characteristics bore fruit affecting the success of the Carolingian state.

The council of Aix-la-Chapelle in May, 817, sounded the first keynote. Puritanically obsessed by the uncertainty of human life and the inevitability of death, Louis had, with the advice and consent of his barons and the approbation of the

Holy See, solemnly apportioned the realm among his three sons, so that, should he die suddenly, no question might arise about the succession—a most un-Machiavellian procedure and a veritable Pandora's box of troubles as the not-too-distant future would prove. Next, a reformation of the clergy was undertaken. The churchmen were urged to submit to a more disciplined mode of life and to surrender many of their worldly ambitions and habits—an exceedingly difficult request and one which provoked a wave of discontent. The Frankish state was immediately faced with a rebellion by lay lords, who felt that their interests were infringed upon by the *divisio imperii*, and by clerical dignitaries, who resented the intrusion into their personal lives. But the revolt was subdued by harsh measures, notably by the pitiless maltreatment inflicted upon Louis's own nephew, young King Bernard of Italy. The death of the Empress Irmingard shortly after Bernard's murder seemed like heavenly vengeance. A gloom fell over the palace, broken only by Louis's fateful marriage to the wilful but accomplished Judith (819).

The coming of Judith to the imperial court signaled a decade of violent controversy and debate. For, as luck would have it, in 823 the unpredictable Judith gave birth to a son, a prince of Frankland who, by the division of 817 (twice reaffirmed, 819 and 821), would have no inheritance ; and much of the intrigue and disorder of the third and fourth decades of the century may be traced to a struggle between maternal ambition and the constitution—in other words, to a tug-of-war for the soul of Louis the Pious. Seeds of strife had long existed, but the strong arm of Charles the Great and his shrewd political wisdom had held them in check. Louis had few of his father's qualities, and factionalism became the order of the day. Clergy and nobility were ranged against the Emperor, culminating in the latter's humiliating penance at Attigny for the death of his nephew ; clergy against nobility over the question of control of church properties by lay lords—a result of Charles Martel's sequestration of ecclesiastical lands for the support of his cavalry ; clergy against clergy as issue was joined in the subject of the proper veneration which may be paid to the holy icons ; clergy against the laity in an attempt to repress popular superstitions ; clergy

and Emperor against the nobility in a struggle to reform the church and rectify the deplorable condition of the inferior clergy ; and clergy against nobility and Emperor in a challenge to the increasing prestige of the Jews.

All these clashes of divergent opinions and personalities peer out at us from the pages of Agobard's treatises. In fact, one of his works is our major source for the Attigny council, since the official record of the transactions is no longer extant. Here he reminds a prelate whom he is addressing to use the painful memory of that assembly to induce the Emperor to begin the restoration of expropriated church lands to their lawful owners. The sacrilegious spoliation of ecclesiastical property was hampering not only the professional activities of the church but also its hospitality and charity to wayfaring pilgrims. Even the serfs on these lands of the church were being misused in the service of the lay possessors. Agobard, however, sorrowfully admits that some of the worst offenders were clerical barons, who were diverting funds from the church's poor to the maintenance of shameful actors, mimes, and jongleurs. On the subject of icons, Agobard, as a man of plain common sense, disapproved their use in church. He was not opposed to artistic representations as such, so long as they were secular in character and for secular enjoyment. But he insists learnedly that they have no place in the religious cult. His attitude here is the same rational, unimaginative, unappreciative attitude we have already observed in his dealing with folk-paganism. It also appears in his minority-report against the employment of trial by ordeal, in which he pleads sensibly for due investigation and for a judgment based on truth derived from sifting the evidence.

Even in 829, when more serious matters were at stake, Agobard did not fail to throw the light of sanity upon another outbreak of superstitious frenzy. At Uzès, where the relics of Saint Firminus, a sixth-century prelate, were venerated, great numbers of people were suffering from seizures after the manner of epilepsy. Other symptoms also manifested themselves : marks similar to sulphur burns were erupting on the bodies of the victims. No one was dying of the affliction, but neither was anyone recovering. Popular opinion attributed the unknown ailment to demonic possession ; and men and women of all ages,

stricken with irrational terror, were flocking to certain shrines, making propitiatory offerings of gold, silver, cattle, and farm-products. In due time, these circumstances came to the attention of Agobard. His reaction was cautious but shrewd. It is true, he writes, that such occurrences are permitted by God, for according to many passages in Scripture He has often used such means to compel men to be converted to the true faith. The devil may indeed be a secondary cause ; but, if so, he is merely an instrument of God. Evil at all times must be resisted ; hearts should be lifted up to God alone. In this particular instance, the Bishop of Lyons believed that the people had temporarily lost their wits, and that they were misled by their terror. They would do far better, Agobard advises, if they gave their offerings to the poor and to pilgrims, and then came for healing to the presbyters who would anoint them with the holy oils. This incident, like the story concerning the sky-ships from the fairy land of Magonia, again raises significant questions about public opinion. Were the irrational expressions of mob-feeling spontaneous, or were they aroused by some kind of propaganda? In both cases, high and low alike were affected ; there was no perceptible distinction here between ranks of society. If these demonstrations were the result of well-organized prompting, what end was served? In part, of course, we may discern the profit-motive. How was it possible for such obviously general and popular reactions to be so quickly and satisfactorily checked by one man, whose only weapon against the mass-psychology was a rational plea rather plainly stated? The sudden change of sentiment in both cases is certainly remarkable.

But let us return to Bishop Agobard. From him also we have a picture of the degraded condition of the lower clergy which cried for remedy. For his own subordinates he insisted on worthiness and devotion. A cleric should use the sacred ministry neither as a ladder to worldly honour nor merely as a means of livelihood. Pure preaching is a better adornment than vestments, fine music, and delicate taste in food, clothing, or art. In a similar letter, Agobard deplored the abuse of the sacerdotal office in the system of domestic chaplains employed by most of the nobles. All too often these laymen

presented illiterate or even criminal serfs, and demanded their immediate ordination so that the barons might have the comforts of religion without its obligations. Yet Agobard is perhaps best known—unfortunately so—because of his five treatises against the Jews. During the mid-820's the Jews had gained such prestige and influence at the Carolingian court that they were granted extraordinary immunities and privileges. A Christian priest was by law forbidden to baptize the slave of a Jewish household without the owner's consent ; imperial courtiers curried favour by showering gifts of elaborate garments upon the wives of prominent Jews ; and Jewish merchants were encouraged to sell contaminated meat and wine as peculiarly "Christian" fare ; while the market-day was changed from Saturday to Sunday. Many Christians were so alarmed that they considered abandoning Christianity. Simple churchgoers were beginning to frequent the synagogues and to prefer Jewish sermons to Christian homilies. Jewish concern with genealogy was profoundly impressive to humble Christians, and Christian courtiers were seeking blessings from the rabbis instead of from the priests. Agobard tried to meet the problem by audiences at court, by letters of appeal, and by constant exhortation, but to no avail. Such an amazing situation evokes queries that, apart from some consideration of public opinion, prove practically unanswerable. How was it that Franks—Christian since the days of Clovis three hundred years before—could hold their religion so lightly as to come dangerously near apostasy? What was the attraction exercised by Judaism? Was it the appeal of novelty? How did a minority group obtain such widespread official and popular support? How was it that, without a popular revolt, the Saturday synagogue rite could almost supplant the Sunday Mass? Does the fact that Agobard stood practically alone mean that most of the high-ranking Carolingian clergymen, as well as the court and the people, favoured the Jewish expansion?

The welter of the factions that divided the realm of Louis the Pious constantly shifted their vantage-points ; and not until the latter years of the third decade of the ninth century did there finally appear an aristocratic party and a fairly

well-defined court party. Both included clerics, and both included magnates. Yet the difference between the two factions was quite real : the palace entourage favoured the concentration of power in the imperial bureaucracy ; the other group advocated the decentralization of power among the lay and ecclesiastical barons. Thus, the former were, incipiently, at least, absolutists ; while the latter were, at least by profession, constitutionalists. The former, as was to be expected, had as its nominal centre the Emperor Louis himself ; but its real centre was the Empress Judith, her young son Charles (the Bald), and her intimates, among them the dashing and gallant Count Bernard of Barcelona. The aristocratic element rallied about the three older sons of Louis and the memory of his first wife, the gracious and beloved Irmingard, but more particularly about Lothair, the eldest son, who by the *divisio imperii* was to inherit the imperial authority and the imperial portion of the Carolingian state, and who already bore the title, dignity, and function of co-emperor. We can see the gradual emergence of the two parties in three of Agobard's books. To Count Matfred, one of the leading Frankish nobles, he deplors the growth of lawlessness among the masses who, he says, no longer fear or respect the emperor : they boast that, should one of their crimes ever reach the court for trial, it could be easily settled by bribery. In retaliation and in an attempt to silence Agobard, the court quickly sent up a trial-balloon by levelling at him the charge of heresy, but this proved to be a signal failure. Agobard's orthodoxy was too well known, and he was able successfully to defend himself. His only extant sermon alludes to the existence of the two clearly recognized parties.

By the year 830, the widening gulf was so apparent that open conflict was inevitable. At the diet of Compiègne in May, a closely-knit conspiracy of the magnates overwhelmed the emperor and caused Lothair actively to assume the reins of government. Judith was committed to a convent-prison, and Count Bernard was forced to take refuge in flight. But the revolt was short-lived : by the autumn diet of Nimwegen (830), Louis the Pious's intrigues had deviously sundered the conspirators and had contrived his reinstatement. Back in

power, he undertook punitive measures against many high-ranking nobles of the aristocratic party. Unfortunately the emperor's prudence was not long-lived. In the latter part of 831, when he was fifty-three years old, he took the dangerous step of deposing his son Lothair from the dignity of co-emperor—a dignity which the first-born had held for fourteen years. In 832, he elicited even more resentment by depriving his son Pippin of the kingdom of Aquitaine—also a part of the constitutional settlement of 817—and assigning it to the nine-year-old son of Judith. The threat of rebellion raised its head anew ; and only the unusually severe winter prevented hostilities until the spring of 833. Meanwhile, Pope Gregory IV was reluctantly drawn into the impending crisis, ostensibly as a peace-maker, but in reality as a partisan of the baronial group. By the summer of 833, the old emperor was defeated and Lothair was again the head of the Frankish realm. Judith was banished to an Italian prison, the youthful Charles was kept in custody at Prüm, and Louis the Pious was a penitent declaring himself unworthy of the imperial dignity.

Once again this development may be observed through the eyes of Agobard. In a letter to the emperor, he had warned him of the peril and had advised penance and abdication. Louis ignored the appeal and suffered the consequences. Agobard then defends the questionable papal participation on the ground of the superiority of ecclesiastical authority to civil power, and superiority that had added weight since the Pope appeared as the advocate of the (817) constitution against a ruler who by violating it merited deposition. Later, as the climax of the second revolt approached, Agobard summons the whole world to witness the lawfulness of this action against a shameless, senile tyrant ; and, after Louis's second defeat, he renders thanks for the victory and calls upon the Empire to rally behind the new government. But the results of the second revolt were no more stable than those of the first. Under the influence of Rabanus Maurus in Germany and of Archbishop Drogo in Aquitaine, a change of sentiment was effected during the winter. In May, 834, Louis was reclothed with the insignia of office, and Lothair and his partisans were in full flight. Meanwhile, on the north-western frontiers



appeared a new menace to the Carolingian commonwealth, the Northmen. Agobard, now an old man, endured exile for his share in the revolutions, and his see was surrendered to the administration of Amalarius of Metz, during the years of banishment. His last writings are directed against this man who has been called "one of the most original personalities of the Carolingian epoch." Almost totally unconcerned about the world surrounding him, Amalarius had built up a kind of dream-world all his own. Oddly enough, it proved to be an attractive world to many of the people of his day. He tells us that he wrote under an urgent inspiration that knew no let nor hindrance; and, in so doing, he imparted to the familiar liturgy of the church a gossamer appeal hitherto unknown. His imagination sowed the seed which, a century or less in the future, would emerge in the liturgical drama, and which was destined to reach full flower in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on one hand and, on the other, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Despite much that was trivial, through the works of Amalarius imaginative literature had entered the stream of Western European civilization. But Agobard, the unappreciative, could not brook such airy "nonsense"; and, with the help of his diligent follower, Deacon Florus, he ultimately secured Amalarius's displacement and his own restoration to the see of Lyons.

The full peace of the empire seems to have been accomplished about 838. Clemency had been granted to most of the former rebels; and even the young Charles had, with relative ease, been invested with the lands of Pippin, who by then had died. But, a year later, the Frankish state experienced a sore shock when the royal chaplain, Bodo, renounced Christianity for Judaism, changed his name to Eleazar, married a Jewess, went to Spain, and engaged in intrigue with the Muslims against his erstwhile fatherland. Louis the Pious, who died in June, 840, under the suspicion of witchcraft, was buried at Metz by his illegitimate half-brother, the faithful Drogo. Two weeks earlier, Bishop Agobard had died, reconciled to his emperor, but by an ironic twist of fate destined to be deprived of his rightful place in ninth-century history—that is, until all his works were rediscovered in 1605. During

the decade after Louis's death, the civil strife of the three brothers, Lothair, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald, was solved by the precarious treaty of Verdun, which marked the end of the great Carolingian empire and the faint beginnings of the modern territorial states ; whereas the republic of the mind and the world of letters was rent by quarrels over the morose doctrines of a hapless Saxon monk, Gottschalk, and the inauguration of the dazzling career of a scintillating Irishman, John Scotus Erigena. Perhaps it is also noteworthy that these political and intellectual conflicts were symbolized by a more deep-seated schism—the development of the vernacular languages of Western Europe.

Instead of solving problems raised by our inquiry, I have merely stated them. I have moreover limited most of my illustrations, which could have been vastly extended, to the writings of a single man. But even this narrow selection reveals a very wide area in which the first half of the ninth century was characterized by complete freedom of thought and expression ; indeed, by a freedom that was too free, a freedom that was chaotic and seriously needed some restraint, or perhaps a guiding principle. One is strangely and strongly reminded here of the personal freedom and the independence that characterized the later and greater Renaissance of fifteenth-century Italy.

# THE CONSPIRACY OF GENERAL MALET

*by* Godfrey LeMay

AT HALF-PAST TWO on the morning of October 23rd, 1812, three men left a lodging house in an obscure quarter of Paris and began to walk, through drenching rain, towards the Popincourt Barracks. The first man had twisted around his waist a tricolour sash which gave him a vaguely official dignity: this was André Boutreux, aged 28, an unsuccessful poet and student of law from Rennes, now doing his best to look as much like a commissioner of police as he could. The second man wore, self-consciously, a captain's uniform: this was Jean-Auguste Rateau, and until late the previous night he had been a corporal in the National Guard of Paris. Neither (if one may believe the statements which each made later) knew quite where he was going, nor why he had suddenly achieved such dazzling promotion. The third man wore the gold-embroidered uniform and plumed hat of a general of brigade. This was General Claude-François Malet, and he had no doubts whatever about his destination or his purpose. He had broken out of prison a few hours earlier, and he was on his way to overthrow the Napoleonic Empire.

Colonel Gabriel Soulier, commandant of the 10th Cohort of the National Guard, stationed at Popincourt, had gone early to bed, for he felt the fever upon him. He was awakened some time after three that morning by an excited orderly; and, after dressing hurriedly, found himself listening, dumb-founded, to a strange general officer who introduced himself as "General Lamotte, appointed last night to be military governor of Paris," and added, almost in the same breath, that the Emperor Napoleon had died "under the walls of Moscow," that the Imperial Senate had met at the Luxembourg Palace the night before, and had abolished the Empire and set up a provisional republic, and that Soulier himself had



GENERAL MALET, "the last of the Romans"

been promoted to general of brigade. The colonel wept with emotion, for (as he was later to explain to the court-martial which condemned him to death) he dearly loved the Emperor. Indeed, his sentiments were so volatile, and the effects of his fever so distressing, that he was constrained to excuse himself so that he might change his clothes. He did not for a moment question the truth of the news, nor the genuineness of the fistful of *senatus consulta*, orders of the day and proclamations which "General Lamotte" (to give Malet the alias which he was to retain for the next six hours) flourished at him. He sent for his adjutant, Captain Piquerel, and ordered him to call out the garrison. Then, having received a sheaf of proclamations and instructions which he was to take to the Prefect of the Seine as soon as it was light, he returned to his bed.

The 10th Cohort, still fuddled with sleep, was paraded in hollow square ; and, by the light of torches which hissed and spluttered in the rain, Boutreux mumbled his way through a dozen decrees, proclamations and statements of government

policy. General Moreau (then in exile in the United States) was to be president of the republic ; among his colleagues would be General Malet, Marshal Augereau, and Carnot, the great "organizer of victory." In addition, the new Cabinet included men who were known to be Royalists, Jacobins, moderate republicans, constitutional monarchists, and devoted Catholics. In short, the new government might appeal, through the name of one or other of its members, to practically everyone in France who was not a convinced Bonapartist (and to some, perhaps, who would like to see Bonapartism without Napoleon). The government's policy was as comprehensive as its personnel, and promised something for everybody. Taxes would be reduced ; the laws of conscription were annulled ; a peace conference was to be summoned at once ; the imprisoned Pope was to be returned to the States of the Church ; holders of "national lands"—estates taken from the clergy in 1789—would be confirmed in possession ; everyone was to keep whatever jobs and honours the Emperor had given him ; there would be higher pay for private soldiers, and double pay and promotion all round for officers. When Boutreux had finished, Malet delivered an energetic harangue ; and then, as day was breaking, led five of the Cohort's six companies into the streets and towards the prison of La Force. The soldiers had muskets but no ammunition, for their cartridge-boxes contained only the wooden dummies used in drill. As they marched, the rain, which had fallen relentlessly throughout the speechifying, stopped and the sun broke through the clouds.

At La Force, Malet drew up his troops, hammered on the great door, summoned the governor (Bault by name), and gestured to Boutreux to read once more the *senatus consultum* announcing the end of the Empire. Then he demanded the immediate release of the prisoners Guidal and Lahorie. Bault was doubtful : his orders, he said, were strict, and he felt that he ought to send for authority to General Savary, the Minister of Police. "General Savary," Malet said, "is no longer Minister of Police ; General Lahorie is his successor ; and if you do not obey me you will be declared an outlaw." Bault delayed no longer, and sent for the prisoners.

General Victor-Claude-Alexandre Fanneau de Lahorie, aged 46, was a man of honour. His great misfortune was to have been chief of staff to General Moreau at the time of that officer's unsuccessful conspiracy eight years before. He had protested his own innocence, but had thought it prudent to go abroad, and had been sentenced to death in his absence. He had returned secretly to France in 1805, and lived quietly in the country, probably with the connivance of Fouché, then Minister of Police. In 1811, Savary, with whom Lahorie had served in the Army of the Rhine, succeeded Fouché; Lahorie wrote to his former comrade in arms, revealing his whereabouts, and asking for a pardon. His arrest followed at once; he was imprisoned, and then told that he would be permitted to emigrate to the United States. Indeed, when he was summoned that morning, he believed that the expected passport had arrived at last; instead, he was confronted by his old acquaintance, General Malet, who told him a story of the Emperor's death and the formation of a new government, and presented him with the commission of Minister of Police.

General Maximilien Guidal, aged 46, had a darker background. He had been cashiered for drunkenness and insubordination in 1799; and his military career would have ended then had his wife not been on the most intimate terms with Director Barras. Influence in high places regained his commission for him; and he held it with little distinction until 1803, when he was cashiered again for the same failings. Then he faded into the underworld, emerging only to be arrested for *manoeuvres suspectes* (which probably included offering to betray Marseilles to the British fleet). He was then awaiting court-martial. When he received Bault's summons, he brought down with him his cell-mate, a Corsican named Joseph Boccheciampi, who had been a prisoner of state on and off since 1803 and had (if one may judge by this invariable description of him given in the documents of the time) no other occupation.

These three men—Lahorie, Guidal and Boccheciampi, Prisoner of State—joined Malet at the prison entrance. There were hurried greetings and explanations. "It is eighteen years since we last met," Lahorie remarked. There



GENERAL HULIN, MILITARY GOVERNOR OF PARIS.  
" Luckily he was only wounded in the head "

was a brief division of spoils. Lahorie had already been told that he was Minister of Police. No specific post was reserved for Guidal, but Boccheciampi was told that he could be Prefect of the Seine, if he liked. Then, Malet divided his forces ; taking Rateau with him, he himself led one company towards the Place Vendôme, while the rest marched off under the command of Lahorie.

Lahorie's first stop was at the Prefecture of Police. The building was guarded by a detachment of the National Guard, commanded by Lieutenant Hilaire Beaumont. He and his men received the news of the new régime with pronounced enthusiasm, and the lieutenant, in high fettle, waved his sword, and offered to run it through the body of the inspector-general of police, who tried to break through

the cordon of troops which at once surrounded the prefecture. Lahorie entered, and arrested Baron Pasquier, the Prefect of Police, and Colonel Desmarest, chief of the military police, sending them both off at once to La Force under guard. Then, leaving Boutreux to mop up and take over, Lahorie and Guidal moved on, with their four companies, to the Ministry of Police.

The Minister, General Savary, Count of Rovigo, rose from his bed to answer the hammering at his door, clad in his nightshirt. Lahorie arrested him at once with grave dignity, adding pointedly that he should count himself fortunate to have fallen into the hands of a man of honour. But the soldiery were less restrained, and, while Lahorie was out of the room for a few moments, threatened to lynch the Minister on the spot. There was much brandishing of bayonets, and a lieutenant called out: "Creatures like that ought to be spitted like frogs." Indeed the atmosphere was so menacing that Lahorie, on his return, thought it unsafe to entrust Savary to a junior officer, and sent him off to La Force under Guidal's personal charge. The Minister was given time to pull on a shirt and a pair of breeches, and was then bundled down the stairs and into a cab.

Guidal, however, was already showing some of his old habits. He found a bottle somewhere, and it was obvious that he had drunk a good deal of it. His attention wandered and, as the cab jolted over the cobbles of the quays, Savary leapt out and began to run for shelter. But Guidal was equal to the emergency. He shouted "Stop, thief!" at the top of his voice, and the people of the street showed themselves only too ready to chase an escaping malefactor. Savary slipped and fell, and a dozen hands grabbed him before he could rise. His captors showed unrestrained pleasure when they found out who he was; he was hustled to La Force in the midst of a mocking, buffeting throng, and there asked only that the governor should give him a private cell and hide the key.

Thus far, Malet's plans had gone without a hitch. His colleagues had shown themselves to be deft arresters of policemen; and messengers were carrying the orders of "General



Lamotte " to all the key points in the city. Each of the commanders of the National Guard received precise instructions as to the disposition of his troops, and each was required to present himself, with a detachment, at the Place Vendôme. Most of them obeyed unquestioningly. Even the commander of the garrison at the Luxembourg Palace, who knew quite well that no meeting of the Senate had taken place there on the previous night, did not refuse outright. He searched for the Praetor of the Senate, failed to find him, went to the Hôtel de Ville, was told there that the news was authentic, and then went alone to the Place. Colonel Rabbe, commanding the First Regiment of the Municipal Guard, reputedly the most loyal troops in Paris, received his orders as he was about to start for Beauvais, to preside over a recruiting commission : he cancelled his arrangements at once, moved his troops as his orders directed, and reported with a full company at the Place Vendôme.

Meanwhile, Colonel Soulier had risen from his sick bed and by half-past seven was telling his news to wide-eyed officials at the Hôtel de Ville. Frochot, the prefect, a count of the Empire and member of the Council of State, had not yet arrived ; he kept leisurely hours, and was then riding in from his home at Nogent-sur-Marne. His secretary sent a messenger to meet him, bearing a scribbled note in Latin—" *Imperator fuit.*" On his arrival, Frochot showed no outward signs of surprise when he read orders to prepare a room for the first meeting of the new government—of which, he learnt for the first time, he was himself a member. He gave the necessary instructions at once, adding a private direction to his secretary to have his carriage horsed and held in readiness outside a back door. Apart from this single act or prudence, he displayed a ready will to collaborate with the new authorities.

By nine o'clock, the Place Vendôme was swarming with troops, many of whom were zealous in republican demonstrations. Count Réal, a Councillor of State, had occasion to cross the square, and asked an officer what was happening.

"Who the devil are you?" was the reply.

"I am Count Réal."

"There aren't any counts any more."

And, with these ominous words in his ears, Réal hastened away to put himself under the protection of his friend, the Minister of War.

During this time, Malet had been behaving with his customary vigour. He had left his company in the Place Vendôme, where they were soon fraternizing with the detachments which were arriving from all over the city. Malet himself entered Headquarters, to deliver orders of dismissal to General Hulin, the military governor of Paris. Hulin was a burly veteran of the taking of the Bastille and of the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, and had given proof of his Bonapartist devotion when he presided over the military court which had pronounced the sentence of execution on the Duke of Enghien. He was stiff in intellect, but not credulous. He scrutinized the papers which Malet placed before him, and then said abruptly: "And now, general, have the kindness to show me your own orders."

"I will do so in private."

Hulin led the way to his private office, stood aside for Malet to enter, and then followed him. As he closed the door, Malet thrust a pistol into his face, cried: "Orders! Here they are!" and fired. Hulin fell; and Malet stepped over the bleeding body, locked the door on the outside, and took possession of the governor's office.

Only one obstacle now remained between him and military control of Paris—Hulin's chief of staff, Colonel Doucet. This officer had already received orders of the familiar pattern (with the usual announcement of his own promotion), with one significant addition: he was to arrest at once his adjutant, Captain Laborde, a bleak and unbluffable man, with twenty-five years' service in the *gendarmerie*, and one, moreover, who knew Malet by sight. At this point, Malet's luck began to fail. General Desnoyers, an unemployed officer to whom Rateau had been sent with orders to supersede General Hulin, had not arrived; indeed, Desnoyers had been unconvinced either by Rateau or by the papers he had brought, and did not stir. Had things gone well, Desnoyers would have taken over Headquarters, leaving Malet free to command in the streets. As it was, after waiting in Hulin's office for some time, Malet went alone to see that Doucet had carried out his orders. But Doucet,

likewise, had shown some doubts, and he was actually in consultation with Laborde when Malet entered the room. Laborde recognized him at once, and cried out : " That's not Lamotte, it's Malet, a state prisoner." Malet turned his back, to hide his movement as he tried to draw his pistol. His action was reflected in a mirror behind him, and Laborde seized him around the body. Doucet joined in the struggle ; Laborde shouted for the guard, and Malet was overpowered and bound. Then, gagged so that he could not address the troops, he was exhibited from the balcony of Headquarters. It was just after half-past nine.

From then onwards, Doucet took firm command. Sheepish officers were called in from the square, and told to take their troops back to barracks and keep them there. Orders were sent for the release of the chiefs of police from La Force. A squad of *gendarmes* arrested Lahorie in Savary's office (where he was trying on the Minister's uniforms). Guidal, much the worse for liquor, was found in a restaurant ; the food in La Force, he explained, had been meagre and bad.

Boccheciampi remained at large for several hours. He had had a puzzling day. He had decided not to be Prefect of the Seine ; his courage failed him when he looked at the imposing bulk of the Hôtel de Ville, and he reflected that his French was so corrupt, and his clothes so ragged, that no one would obey him. Instead, he asked Lahorie for a pass to La Force, and spent some time there, in familiar surroundings, visiting a friend named Muller, whom he offered to liberate. Muller refused, and Boccheciampi then paid some calls in the city. Late that afternoon, he was found in the corridors of the Hôtel de Ville, telling officials : " I am an inoffensive person, released from prison this morning, and I have come to ask the prefect to be so kind as to give me a foreigner's pass to stay in Paris." Within a few moments, he had resumed his interrupted career as a prisoner of state.

Rateau had returned from his fruitless mission to General Desnoyers just as Malet was being exhibited from the balcony in the Place Vendôme. At once, he hurried away, and hired a cab to take him back to the lodgings from which his adventures had begun that morning. The driver, Georges by name,

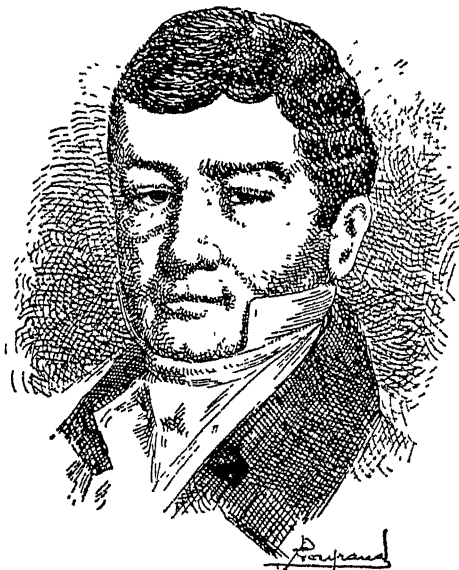
showed only mild interest when, at the end of the journey, his fare jumped out stark naked, carrying his uniform rolled up in his shirt, tossed him a coin in payment, and then scurried across the street and through a doorway. He thought (as he deposed later) that there was a party on somewhere, and that he had been driving a guest who had arrived late. It had occurred to Rateau that it was dangerous to go on being a captain, and he could scarcely wait to get back into his corporal's dress. But too many of his comrades had seen him that morning at Malet's side ; and he was behind bars before the evening.

The affair was not quite finished. Baron Pasquier, liberated from La Force, fairly hurtled back to his Prefecture, arriving well before the news that the Empire was still in being. The lively Lieutenant Beaumont was still in command ; he pointed his sword at Pasquier, howled " Escaped prisoner ! " and led a general rush in pursuit. Pasquier dived in terror into an apothecary's shop, and was dragged out of a back room, where he was found cowering in an unconvincing disguise in a borrowed wig. He was then, as one account runs, " not in command of himself," and had to be revived with smelling salts and burning feathers.

By noon, Paris was tranquil, and the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès thought it safe to take the news of the conspiracy and its failure to the Empress Marie Louise. She received it with her customary phlegm, observing : " I should like to know what they thought they could have done to the Emperor of Austria's daughter."

Malet and twenty-four others appeared before a military court on October 27th. From the first, Malet insisted that he and he alone carried the full responsibility, and that those who were accused with him had merely carried out his orders in good faith. When the president of the court asked for the names of his accomplices, he answered : " I had none ; but I should have had the whole of France if I had been successful—including you, Mr. President." He made no defence : " A man who sets out to vindicate his country's rights needs no defence. He triumphs or he dies."

Guidal had fallen into a mood of sulky fatalism. His only request, he told the court, was that he should be shot as soon



BARON PASQUIER, PREFECT OF POLICE,  
"revived with smelling salts and burning feathers"

as possible. But the remainder of the prisoners, in their fashions, put up a fight for life. "What is my crime?" said Soulier. "It is that I believed that the Emperor was dead." Lahorie protested that he had believed Malet to be speaking the truth, that he thought that the Empire had fallen, and that he saw nothing in the recent history of France to make it improbable that a dynasty might disappear overnight. True, he had been deceived; but so had others. Why, he asked persistently and embarrassingly, was the Prefect of the Seine not on trial, too? Most of the others pleaded either that they had acted on orders from above, or that they were devoted to the Emperor. "The military code," said Captain Piquetel, "is clear and precise. Privates obey sergeants, sergeants obey captains, and captains obey colonels. If they refuse, they are shot. What is my crime? I obeyed my orders." Cries of "Vive l'Empereur" came repeatedly from the dock, and once Lahorie added mordantly "And long live his justice!" The verdict was hardly in doubt; thirteen others were sentenced to die with Malet, including Guidal, Lahorie, Colonels Rabbe and Soulier, Piquetel,

Lieutenant Beaumont, and Boccheciampi, Prisoner of State. Two of the condemned were reprieved—Rabbe because he was a most distinguished officer, and Rateau, either because the court thought him to be a silly corporal without real responsibility or—as was said in the cafés—because his brother was procurator-general of Bordeaux. The rest were led out to execution, without the services of a priest, on the Plain of Grenelle on October 29th.

The beginning of the conspiracy had been bizarre ; the end was macabre. Malet asked, as a last request, to be allowed to command the firing squad. For a quarter of an hour he drilled it, commenting harshly on its sloppiness, and following each order with a rasping "As you were." When at last he stood to attention and gave the word "Fire!" everybody's nerves were on edge. There came a ragged volley, which left Malet still on his feet, and half a dozen others wounded but alive. A second volley followed, and even then Malet still needed the *coup de grâce* from the commanding officer's pistol.

Boutreux was still at liberty. He had stayed quietly in the Prefecture of Police for a few hours, and had walked out equally quietly in the confusion that followed the return of Baron Pasquier. Then he went to Courcelles, living quite openly and apparently quite unconscious that he might be in danger. Even so, it was some weeks before he was arrested. At his trial, the prosecutor suggested that it was particularly wicked for a student of law to have believed in a provisional republic. "Even if the Emperor had died," came the question, "you must have known that legally his son would succeed him?"

"No, I didn't know. I've only done private law, and the succession to states comes in the public law syllabus."

The sentence was death. Boutreux spent some of his last hours in composing appeals in verse to the Minister of War. He was shot on January 30th, 1813.

With Malet and his dupes in their graves, the authorities in Paris faced another problem : how were they to appease the Emperor? How was the whole affair to be explained away? For Malet had done two things. He had demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that the whole vast structure of the Grand

Empire, with its massive armies and its showy institutions, rested upon the life of one man ; its foundations scarcely reached below the surface. And he had made the government look ridiculous. Quips were repeated from end to end of Paris. The whole thing, it was said, had been " a famous *tour de force*." It was recalled that, when Savary was arrested, his wife had rushed to his rescue, in a transparent nightgown ; she was the only person in the whole affair, they said in the cafés, who had shown up well. Men delighted to repeat to one another the words in Doucet's first report to the Minister of War : " Luckily, General Hulin was only wounded in the head." (That burly veteran recovered ; the ball passed through one cheek and stopped at the base of his skull. He was immediately nicknamed "*Bouffe-la-balle*." )

Ministers had a choice of two explanations. They could put out that Malet had been the spearhead of a formidable plot, in which event it might be reasonably asked what the police had been doing not to get wind of it before ; or they could say that Malet was an isolated lunatic, in which event they might be asked to explain what negligence in high places had allowed him to go so far as he had. They wavered between the two. Officially, Malet had been guilty not of a " conspiracy " but of an " escapade," and the bulletins in the *Moniteur* said only that " Three ex-generals led some National Guards astray and turned them against the police." At the same time, they arrested something like 1,500 people all over France. The police searched hard for Rouget de Lisle, on the grounds that, as he had written the Marseillaise twenty years earlier, he probably had something to do with the business. A boy of fourteen was expelled from a lyceum in Paris for having written an epitaph to Malet in Latin. General Lamotte, whose name Malet had borrowed, had some difficulty in convincing Savary that he knew nothing whatever about the affair until it was all over.

Who was Malet? He was born on June 24th, 1754, at Dôle, near the Swiss frontier, into a family which accounted itself as *noble*. His father had been awarded the Cross of St. Louis, and Malet himself entered the army when he was 16, and by 1789 was a captain of cavalry. From the first, he accepted the principles of the Revolution with ardour, and was disinherited

by his family in consequence. This martyrdom merely heightened his zeal ; he won a reputation as a devoted " patriot," and moved swiftly from liberalism to Jacobinism of the school of Robespierre. He was out of favour with the authorities for some time after the reaction that followed the guillotining of Robespierre, but in 1799, when Jacobinism came briefly into fashion again, he became a general of brigade. After the *coup d'état* of Brumaire he was among the military groups who refused to welcome Bonaparte as First Consul, talked frothily of tyrannicide, drank toasts to Brutus and liked to call themselves " the last of the Romans." That phrase was on his lips almost at the end ; as he was driven to execution, he called from his cab to a group of children playing in the street : " Do not forget the Twenty-Third of October. I am going to die now, but I am not the last of the Romans." He was on the fringes of military plots under the Consulate. Napoleon did not employ him with his armies, and he was arrested for conspiracy and imprisoned in 1808. His fondness for cloak-and-dagger schemes never deserted him. In 1809, he concocted a plan of breaking out of prison at a time when the dignitaries of the Empire would all be present at the solemn Te Deum in Notre Dame to commemorate the Emperor's victorious entry into Vienna. Malet proposed to appear before the altar, attended by a man beating a tambourine. Then he would announce : " The usurper is dead. Down with Corsicans ! Down with the police !" and immediately leave the cathedral, barring the doors behind him, with the principal members of the government inside. Then, before they battered their way out, it should be possible to set up a provisional republic. But Malet never overcame the first obstacle—how to get out of gaol in the first place—and the ceremony in Notre Dame passed off without his assistance.

But—this crackbrained scheme notwithstanding—Malet was much more than a cheerful lunatic. He had clearly seen one thing : that if Napoleon died, his régime would collapse. There were others, including members of the Imperial Family, who had made plans of action, should a stray bullet strike down the Emperor. Malet carried the analysis one step further. Might it not be enough if, even for a few days, the Emperor were merely believed to be dead ? Was there not just a chance



that enough prominent men would commit themselves to a change of régime before they discovered the truth, and that they would then be afraid to go back?

In 1812, Malet was transferred on grounds of health from a state prison to an establishment kept by M. Dubuisson, who boarded prisoners who were ailing or thought not to be particularly dangerous. There, Malet had a good deal of freedom, provided that he did not go out of M. Dubuisson's garden. It was there that he met the Abbé Lafon.

Lafon was 38 in 1812, and he had been a prisoner for three years. He was a Royalist and an Ultramontane Catholic ; and his influence can be seen in the terms of policy which Malet ascribed to his provisional government. He also had a number of contacts with the outside world. It was he who introduced Malet to Boutreux ; it was he who took charge of the forging and printing of the bogus decrees. Corporal Rateau was well known at M. Dubuisson's ; he was courting one of the maids, and he often ran errands for the inmates. Madame Malet saw her husband every week ; and through her he was able to send messages to an old fellow-conspirator then doing time in La Force. It was through this channel that he learnt of the presence of Guidal and Lahorie. But what did Guidal and Lahorie know in advance of Malet's plans ? Both denied that they had any communication whatsoever with him, and each was probably speaking the truth. For the whole point of the plot was that as many people as possible should believe in the Emperor's death. Once that was accepted, the rest might follow.

Malet was a fanatic, but he was also exceedingly shrewd. If he were to pass as the governor of Paris, he needed an aide-de-camp, and although Rateau was a sorry choice he was the best to be had. Similarly, the presence of a commissioner of police, the representative of the civil power, would add another touch of authenticity. Boutreux, a very simple soul indeed, had yearned for a government post, and had actually asked Malet to use his influence. When he and Rateau were asked to dine with Malet and Lafon at the lodging house used as a rendez-vous, it is unlikely that either of them knew what was afoot.

The lodgings belonged to an acquaintance of Lafon, a Spanish priest named Caamano. He certainly knew that his

guests were conspirators ; but it is probably that he was content with Lafon's hints that Malet was planning to rescue King Ferdinand of Spain, then deposed and living in custody at Talleyrand's château at Valençay. Lafon and Malet climbed over M. Dubuisson's wall at about nine o'clock on the night of 22nd October. They found Rateau and Boutreux waiting for them at Caamano's. There was dinner, with wine. Then, shortly before midnight, Malet disappeared into an inner room, and emerged in full uniform (his wife had delivered it two days earlier). He spoke in glowing words of the regeneration of France ; the Emperor, he said, was dead ; and he had just received news of the change of government. Boutreux was given a commission as a police official, and presented with a tricolour sash (bought by Madame Malet the day before at a theatrical costumer's). Rateau was promoted captain, and shown his new uniform. Both believed implicitly ; and a good many more people believed Malet before the next twelve hours were up.

How extensive was the organization behind Malet? There are many points in this strange affair which still remain obscure ; but it is almost certain that Malet was supported only by his own family and by a small circle of friends. But what of Lafon? He was certainly in close touch with what amounted by then to an underground movement of French Catholics who were loyal to the imprisoned Pope. The best evidence that Lafon had friends is the success with which he disappeared once the plot failed. He did not accompany Malet to the Barracks ; he was seen once that morning, at the Ministry of Police. Then he vanished. A naked body was found hanging from a tree in the woods near Paris, and identified as Lafon's. But the identity of that corpse remains a mystery, for Lafon appeared in high favour at Louis XVIII's court at the First Restoration, and there wrote the first full (and highly inaccurate) account of the plot, published in Paris in June, 1814. In that, Malet appears as a devoted monarchist, whose principal aim was to bring back the Bourbons. Considering his record, this is unlikely in the highest degree. But he may have dissembled to Lafon, or Lafon, writing in court circles, may have ascribed to the dead Malet principles to which the greater part of the living man's life had been opposed.

The most significant aspect of the whole of that astonishing morning's events was that scarcely a soul gave a thought to the Empire's laws of succession, or to the future of the Napoleonic dynasty. It was this which galled Napoleon. He received the news at Mikaheliska, on the road back from Moscow, on November 6th. He found in Frochot's conduct the most ominous sign of all. As he said sadly to Caulaincourt : " Frochot is an old Jacobin, and he has become used to revolutions. He saw nothing more surprising in this one than in the ten others which had gone before it. He thought it quite possible that I was dead ; and all he was interested in was keeping his place . . . He has probably taken twenty oaths of loyalty to me, and he, like everybody else, forgot all about duty to the dynasty." And, on his return to Paris, this was the theme of the Emperor's blistering reproof to the Council of State. " And you ! you who all agreed with me that the Revolution was finished ! You believed me dead ; that was all very well. But what about my son ? How much did your oaths mean to you, your principles, your protestations of loyalty ? Gentlemen, you make me shudder for the future."

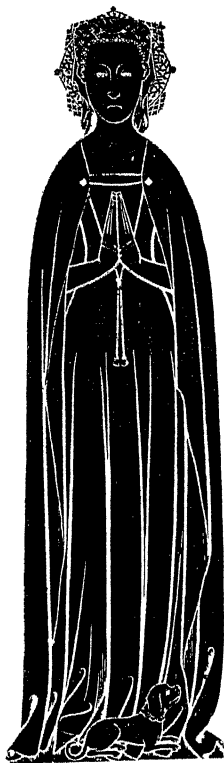
Napoleon had seen to the heart of the matter. France had acquired the habit of revolution ; the secret of stable government had been lost. And Malet had given one more proof of what brittleness there is in autocracy.

## NIBLEY GREEN, 1469

by Jonathan Blow

HATRED OF HER COUSINS, the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle, dominated the entire active life of Margaret, wife and later widow of John Talbot, first Earl of Shrewsbury, the "English Achilles" and formidable opponent of Jeanne d'Arc. Her one object was to strip the Berkeleys of their vast inheritance—their lush manors which filled the whole Vale of Berkeley from the sea wall, built by their men-at-arms along the Severn's southern shore, to where the long western escarpment of the Cotswolds rises suddenly out of the plain; an immense estate which in places spilled over on to the brown, wind-swept table-land above. One and a half miles inland from the Severn, upon a knoll that commands a wide expanse of flat and sometimes flooded meadows, stands the squat bulk of the strongest fortress in the West of England, the castle from which the Berkeleys take their name, built of rose-red stone ferried across the treacherous river from the crags of the Forest of Dean. In its lofty hall—more than eleven yards high—the lords of Berkeley at this time fed a private army of some three hundred retainers. Bullocks by the score were fattened on oats at their manor of Symondshall; flocks of tame pheasants were fed on wheat at Berkeley. Three deer parks, of which only one survives, lay within a few bow shot of the ramparts; and four miles to the south-east stands Michael Wood, then a tract of primaeval forest, much larger than it is today and teeming with every sort of game. On the mile-wide Severn, Thursday's tides were "the lord's tides," and on that day all fish caught, or hunted down among the shoals at low water—salmon and their attendant lampreys, sole ("our Seaverne capon") and even the giant sturgeon—were carried to the castle to feed the host on Fridays.

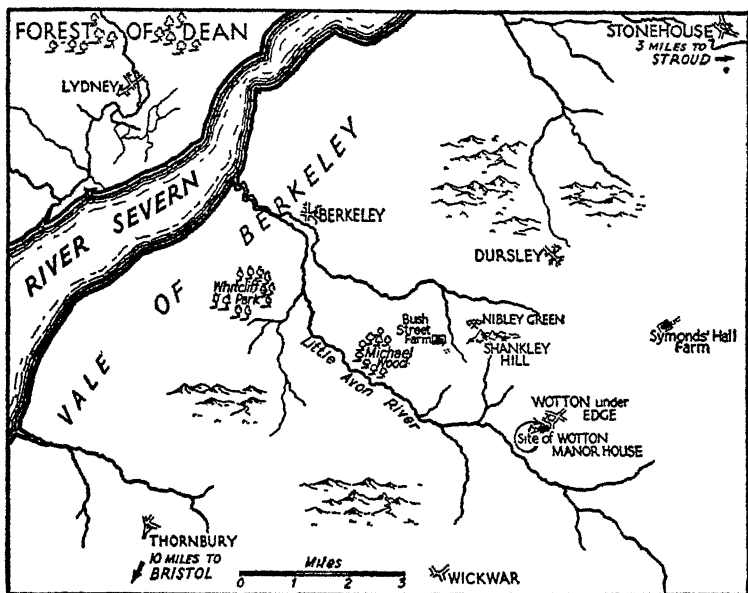
In addition to their lands in Gloucestershire, the Berkeleys held some thirty manors dotted throughout the Home Counties



LADY BERKELEY, wife of Thomas

THOMAS DE BERKELEY "THE  
MAGNIFICENT" 10TH LORD  
OF BERKELEY*Photos : E C. Peckham*

and West Country, as well as properties in Bristol and the City of London ; and, to win this prize, Margaret of Shrewsbury was ready to use any weapons, from packed juries in the King's courts to the daggers of hired assassins. Margaret was the daughter of Elizabeth, the only child of Thomas, tenth lord of Berkeley—"Thomas the Magnificent"—favourite of the usurper Bolingbroke, who made him guardian of the Welsh Marches and Admiral of the King's fleet "west and southward from the mouth of Thames." No earlier Berkeley had ever kept such dazzling state. His sumptuous barge was the marvel



The Vale of Berkeley and Nibley Green

of the West. By a special and somewhat costly Papal Bull, he was allowed a portable altar and the right to choose a "discreet priest," who was granted full powers to absolve him and his lady of all sins, including even those about which the Apostolic See must normally be first consulted. At Berkeley and at his spacious manor house at Wotton-under-Edge, his stables were filled with the barrel-chested battle chargers, and lighter horses bred to gallop after hawk and hound, whose large eyes, tapering legs and delicate tracery of veins betrayed their Eastern ancestry. As wealth and power increased, he began to style himself in correspondence "We Thomas, lord of Berkeley . . . dated in our manor of Portbury" and the like, "which," says his chronicler, "none of his ancestors had so pompously before used to do."

Riches he amassed by a striking variety of means—from teaching his shepherds to shear even the tails and buttocks of their charges, to piracy upon the high seas, once using his position as Admiral to "violently set upon and capture" off

Bordeaux a Genoese merchantman bound for London under the royal warrant of his sovereign with a cargo of wine worth £10,000. This was too much for Henry IV to stomach ; and Thomas was ordered to restore the cargo or appear before his fellow Privy Counsellors. "The sequel whereof," says the chronicler, "was that the servants of this lord made restitution for part, but went away with a great part of the rest of the Genoa goods." War Thomas Berkeley usually made lucrative. As Admiral he was entitled to three-quarters of the spoils of naval actions. In 1405 a force of French knights, men-at-arms and crossbowmen under the Marshal Jean de Rieux landed on the Pembrokeshire coast to aid the Welsh Prince Owen Glendower in his struggle against the English. Thomas Berkeley at once put to sea, caught the French fleet off Milford Haven, sank or burned fifteen of their ships and captured the remaining fourteen "stuffed with men, munition and victuals and so returned with honor and profit." At Agincourt he was less successful. He himself had failed to take a prisoner, but at twilight, riding over the sodden ploughland, he caught sight of Louis, Duke of Bourbon, in the hands of a common English soldier. Much to the relief of the great French nobleman, Thomas Berkeley told the soldier that he would himself take charge of the prisoner ; at which the soldier—furious at being balked of so rich a ransom—drew his dagger and stabbed the Duke.

By marriage and skilful handling of his father-in-law, Gerrard de Insula, lord de Lisle, Thomas had also added to his fortune no less than twenty-two manors scattered through southern England from Northampton to Penzance. His little bride, aged barely seven, he owed to his father Maurice, a partial invalid since the sword-thrust he had received at Poitiers, who almost on his death-bed had negotiated the princely dowry of eleven hundred pounds. Maurice, feeling death close upon him, insisted on immediate marriage. So Thomas, then fourteen, was sent to the ceremony in Buckinghamshire clad in scarlet satin with an escort of three knights "furred with miniver" and twenty squires ; while Maurice spent the wedding day in bed at Berkeley Castle, dressed in cloth of gold. Eleven hundred pounds was a fine dowry. But Thomas, suc-

ceeding at fifteen to the barony, "wittily" set himself "to fit the humours of the good old lord" his father-in-law, keeping open house for him at Berkeley Castle "at all hours," plying him with free fishing and hunting, quartering his arms and becoming his "unseparable companion." So the young lord of Berkeley was not unduly surprised when his father-in-law—to the disgust of his male relatives—left to his daughter, the infant lady of Berkeley, every one of his twenty-two manors. But it was civil war that raised the power of Thomas Berkeley to the highest pinnacle in all his house's history. Richard II he had once sumptuously feasted in the great hall of his castle. Six years later—in 1393, the year of the quarrel between Arundel and John of Gaunt—"to avoid the danger of Court stormes, which then began to bluster with an hollow wind," Thomas obtained leave to tour the Continent, getting the King's written licence to take with him fifteen servants and the not ungenerous "travel allowance" of one thousand marks in money. Back once more at Berkeley, Thomas watched in silent apprehension the despotic rule of Richard and his upstart "Dukeling" favourites. When Bolingbroke was unjustly banished and Richard and his favourites fastened on his vast estates, Lord Berkeley's sympathies and secret correspondence went out to the exiled Duke. At Berkeley, while King Richard was in Ireland, the rebel army gathered "bloody with spurring, fiery red with haste" till all three courtyards and every cranny of the castle were filled with the badge of Neville and Percy. As Richard's uncle York approached with the reluctant royalist levies, the ranks behind him melted and came over to the rebels, followed by their old and incompetent commander. So it was from the lectern of Berkeley church that Bolingbroke harangued the barons of England. And it was Thomas Berkeley who was chosen by that baronage to witness on their behalf King Richard's renunciation of the crown, first in Flint castle and later in the Tower. Thomas never wavered in his support of Bolingbroke. And Bolingbroke, as Henry IV, relied much upon his many talents, choosing him as one of his Privy Council and giving him great commands on sea and land.

Thus the Berkeley acres broadened; and Thomas made money even out of the problem of his own successor. His wife,



whom he adored, died when she was thirty, leaving him an only child, Elizabeth ; but, though barely thirty-eight and in full vigour, he refused always to remarry. No one, while he lived, was allowed to see his written will. When over fifty he sent for James Berkeley, his brother's son, and brought him up as if he was his own. But he let it be known to the mighty Earl of Warwick—then in search of a bride for his eldest son—that Elizabeth was in fact his sole heiress. Warwick leapt at so sumptuous a prize, and the marriage allied Thomas very profitably to one of the most powerful families in all England. But to a wealthy knight with a marriageable daughter Thomas confided that James was his real heir. Again the bait was irresistible, and Thomas added to his coffers a dowry of six hundred pounds. Still guarding his secret, Thomas the Magnificent died, peacefully but suddenly, at Wotton in 1417. His nephew James, then twenty-three, was away in Dorset. But Elizabeth and her husband, now Earl of Warwick, were at his death bed and at once began a feverish search through his many chests of deeds. At last the will was found and unrolled. Considering Thomas's immense possessions, it was not a very comprehensive document. To Elizabeth his daughter he left his "best pair of morning mittens" and a tankard with twenty pounds in it. And to James he left his best bed, his great jet tankard and twenty suits of armour. Of his forty-two manors, his city properties, his castle at Berkeley and his great manor house at Wotton there was no word.

Warwick, however, had two considerable advantages. He was on the spot, and he was one of the foremost captains and most trusted confidants of the new King, Henry V. Seizing the title deeds, he set his clerks to copying the manorial rolls. And, sending couriers post haste to the King, secured within a week of Thomas's death a royal warrant appointing him custodian of Berkeley Castle. James, undaunted, issued a writ from Dorset and "twelve of the most worshipful gentlemen and of the best liveliode within the County of Gloucester" were sworn in as a jury. Warwick, "tasting the intention of the jury to find against him" did all he could to stop the case, meanwhile holding manorial courts in all the Berkeley manors and, armed with title deeds, pocketing the rents. But, while

he was across the Channel aiding the King to conquer Normandy, the jury reached a verdict. James was to inherit Berkeley Castle and all the lands in Gloucestershire, a total of twelve manors. The rest, except Portbury in Somerset, were to go to the Countess of Warwick. To uphold the verdict was another matter. Warwick, through his power at court, secured a privy seal forbidding James to sue him, and then, marching on Berkeley with a great host of retainers, besieged James in the castle. Many had been "hurt and maymed, and some slayne" when the mitred figure of the Bishop of Worcester rode up and secured an armistice.

James Berkeley, recognizing he "was as a weak hopp . . . having no strong pole to wind about," now "wisely winneth with his purse the assistance of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the King's brother." In return for the huge sum of a thousand pounds in cash and the large Welsh estate of James's mother, worth four hundred pounds a year, the royal Duke undertook to secure for James "the quiet possession of the castle and lordship of Berkeley." So at Windsor Castle, in the presence of their new eleven-month-old sovereign Henry VI and the Regent, the Duke of Gloucester, James was acknowledged eleventh lord of Berkeley and reconciled with Warwick, both binding themselves to submit to the judgement of the Lord Chief Justice and the Bishop of Worcester the question of the Berkeley lands in Gloucestershire and the quarrels of their retainers "excepting those that arose between their servants at Hamersmyth by London, and of the blows then given, which they have submitted to the Duke of Gloucester." James was not pleased with the judgement, given three years later, by the Bishop and Chief Justice. Of the twelve Gloucestershire manors three were then awarded to the Warwicks; three manors which were to become the Alsace-Lorraine of the mortal struggle now ahead—Wotton, with its splendid manor house, guarding the foot of the pass that winds up from the Severn Valley on to the heights above; Symondshall on the edge of the table land; and Cowley, with its great flocks of sheep, an isolated outpost far away across the rolling uplands near the first springs of the Thames. Yet so long as Warwick lived, James accepted this unfavourable judgement. He could not well do otherwise, for

at the Windsor reconciliation both litigants had pledged themselves to pay a thousand marks if they broke the verdict of the arbitrators ; and the Berkeley treasury, shorn of three-quarters of its rents, had been drained almost dry by bribes and litigation. The eleventh lord of Berkeley was forced even to pawn the chalices and copes of the castle chapel.

After thirteen years of parsimonious peace, news came from France that the great Earl was dead ; and at once the Berkeleys seized the three disputed manors. Warwick had left no son ; but his eldest daughter Margaret had become the second wife of his fellow general John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury ; and Margaret was to prove the most ruthless of all the Berkeleys' foes. Of her two younger sisters, one had married Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, the powerful favourite of the Queen, and the other a younger son of the great house of Neville. Such was the coalition, holding the greatest offices the Crown could give and virtually controlling the simple, brittle-minded King, that now faced the impoverished lord of Berkeley. A Warrant, bearing the great seal of England, arrived at Gloucester "turning him out of the Commission of the peace, the subseidy and all other commissions that gave him any command, lustre or authority in his country." James was imprisoned in the Tower. Released on the ruinous bail of one thousand pounds, he was ordered to appear, when summoned, in person before the King in chancery. But—considering the unequal standing of the litigants—the King's judges proved remarkably fair. Margaret and her sisters were awarded the three disputed manors, which their mother and father had held for thirteen years, but James was awarded the castle and remaining nine manors of the Gloucestershire estate. And when John Talbot, on sailing for France, asked Parliament for protection for one year from all suites of law, it was granted only on condition that neither the three sisters nor their husbands entered James's manors. James, however, defied the decision of the judges, and absolutely refused to give up the three manors. When a Talbot herald served him at Wotton Manor with a summons to appear in court, James and his retainers forced the herald to chew up and swallow the summons—wax seal, parchment and all.

Now it was open war. Both sides—Talbot and Berkeley—tried by night to collect the rents from each others' luckless tenants. From the impregnable refuge of Berkeley Castle, William—James's eldest son—led raids northwards up the Severn Valley to plunder the Talbot manors of Whaddon, just short of Gloucester, and wealthy Painswick on the hills above. Margaret's son, John Talbot, lately created Viscount Lisle, fired the town of Berkeley beneath the castle walls ; while the Berkeleys, not daring to sally out, cursed him from the ramparts. Since it was impossible for James, directing raid and counter-raid, to leave the scene of action, his wife, the saintly lady Isabel, who had journeyed to London to plead his case in the King's courts, wrote to give him warning : " Revered lord and husband, I commend me to you with all my heart, desiring always to hear of your good wellfare, which God main-tayne. And it please you to heare how I fare, Roger and Jacket (the Talbot lawyers) have asked surety of peace for mee, for their intent was to bringe mee into the Tower But I trust in God tomorrow that I shall goe bayle unto the next Term, and soe goe home, and then to come againe. . . . Bee well ware of false counsell. Keep well your place. The Earl of Shrewsbury lyeth right nye you, and shapeth all the wyles hee can to distresse you and yours . . . For he saith he will never come to the King againe till hee have done you an ill turne. Sur your matter speedeth and doth right well, save my daughter costeth great goods. At the reverence of God send money, or else I must lay my horse to pledge and come home on my feet. Keep well all about you till I come home, and trete not without mee. Then all thinges shall be well with the grace of Almighty God, who have you in his keeping. Written at London the Wednesday after Whitsun. Your wife the lady of Berkeley."

James borrowed twenty-two marks by pawning a gilt mass book, a chest of red satin stoles, two altar cloths and a massive silver chalice ; and every night he slept with the castle keys beneath his pillow. News now reached the castle that a sizable sum of recently collected Talbot rents was in temporary storage about ten miles from Berkeley, at the house of one Richard Andrews. At nightfall, William sent out a raiding party of twenty mounted retainers under a squire called Rice Tewe.

But, as they rode out of the castle and headed eastward for the hills, some hidden eyes had seen them pass, and word was galloped to Wotton Manor, where the Talbots were now installed. Rice Tewe reached and surrounded the house of the unsuspecting Andrews, burst in and "upturned every corner," without, however, finding the gold. Stoking the fire, he thrust into it a branding iron "till it was glowing hott," and promised to seat Andrews upon it if he would not show them the money. This threat was enough, and rapid digging beneath the floor revealed a chest well filled with golden sovereigns. They hurried it out to their horses, to find themselves surrounded by Talbot men-at-arms under Viscount Lisle. A sharp sword-fight followed and, after a most spirited resistance, Tewe and his surviving comrades were secured. Lord Lisle had a few private words with Tewe. The prisoners were then fastened to their own horses and placed in the middle of the Talbot troop, which made rapidly for Berkeley. As they reached the sleeping town, the sky above the high escarpment behind them to the east had already begun to lighten; but it was still too dark to distinguish clearly the badges worn by the retainers. Now above them rose the Castle itself. Tewe—with a dagger at his back—hailed the watch; and there was a pause while a yeoman of James Berkeley's chamber was sent to ask his master for the keys. At length the drawbridge was lowered and the portcullis raised.

Roused from their beds by Talbot sword points, James Berkeley and his four sons were held prisoners in their rooms. Soon, in the courtyard below, they heard the rasping stick and the voice of Margaret. Exactly what happened at the castle during the next eight weeks we do not know; but James and his sons signed some remarkable agreements. Herein they stated that, "without any dures, constraint or coercion" by the Earl and Countess, they had considered among themselves their "great ryots and trespasses . . . and other divers abhominable deeds which they had done to the said Earl, Countess and Viscount . . . with the great number of right riotous and evill disposed people" they had kept within the castle during their "mischeevous rule." And, "considering the great and huge costs which they had put the Earl and Countess too . . . and

also the great punishment which they had deserved after due course of the lawe, likely upon them to ensue and fall . . . they freely offered to the Earl and Countess " a thousand pounds and two hundred pounds to Viscount Lisle. They renounced all claim to the three disputed manors, and would remain Margaret's " true cozens, faithfull men and servants." And they would lease to her their Castle, retaining in it only " house-roome for themselves and six servants "—a clause cunningly inserted by Margaret to mask from the outside world that they were prisoners in their own fortress. These agreements signed, James and his four sons were placed in the midst of a great rout of Talbot retainers and carried down to Bristol, where the Mayor was sent for ; and before him they were made to acknowledge the agreements, and pledged themselves to pay £10,000 if any were not carried out in full. Bundled back to Berkeley, they were next taken before a Judge Bingham at Cirencester, where a jury, gathered from the remotest parts of the country, gave judgement for the Talbots. When Isabel, James's wife, who was still at large, appeared at a court at Gloucester on her imprisoned lord's behalf, Margaret had her thrown into Gloucester castle. There she mysteriously died—a deed which so shocked a servant of one of Margaret's accomplices, that, the same night, he stabbed his master.

Meanwhile, secret and urgent appeals were reaching London from the nobles and bourgeoisie of Gascony, which the Queen and Privy Council—distracted by the first mutterings of civil war in England—had allowed the King of France to over-run. The Gascons begged for Talbot, and the ageing Achilles set sail for France. With him, Margaret sent James Berkeley's two youngest sons, James and Thomas. Bordeaux opened its gates with enthusiasm to the little English army ; and, a few weeks later, Lord Lisle went out to reinforce his father, leaving Margaret alone at Berkeley to guard the three remaining prisoners. Without his wife, James was no match for Margaret ; and she had induced him to issue to writ to test the Cirencester judgement—whereupon her friend James Clifford, Sherif of Gloucestershire, declared the Bristol pledges broken and the entire estate forfeit to Margaret to meet the agreed penalty of £10,000—when suddenly all private

passions froze at the fearful news from France. Shrewsbury had led a furious attack upon the spiked ditch and high stockade of the French camp before Castillon ; the French cannon had ploughed through the advancing column, and a ball had shattered Shrewsbury's leg. Then, as the French closed round in overwhelming numbers, Lisle had stood at bay over his wounded father. All trapped together in a tightening circle, Thomas Berkeley had been taken and James Berkeley slain ; and Margaret's son and husband, undaunted by the odds and refusing quarter, had side by side been killed.

For a short time there was peace in Gloucestershire ; but, although Margaret was at first half stunned, the presence of her little grandson Thomas, now Viscount Lisle, soon revived all her calculated cunning in schemes for his advancement. James, on the other hand, at sixty-three now executed a masterly stroke of policy by marrying Joan Talbot, the late Earl's daughter by his first countess and a sister of the new Earl—a triumph which he owed largely to the new Earl's distaste for his step-mother Margaret. The odds were becoming altogether more even. The great seal of England, which Margaret's sister's husband, the Duke of Somerset, had used against the luckless James, was now in other and more neutral hands. The White Rose was now threatening the Red ; and Somerset fell in the first street-scuffle at St. Albans. Marriage to Joan Talbot paid James immediate dividends—his liberty, his castle and the nine Gloucestershire manors which none of the innumerable courts and arbitrations had ever failed to grant him. And it deprived Margaret of the support of the great Shrewsbury Earldom. With what dignity she could, she retreated to the manor house at Wotton, taking with her her grandson Thomas, Viscount Lisle, an impetuous and attractive youth with all his grandsire's fiery courage and a passionate desire to emulate the deeds of knight errantry. By Margaret, Thomas was brought up to hate his Berkeley cousins as the Infidel or Anti-Christ, as men who had robbed him of his birthright. But for the moment she did not feel strong enough to launch a fresh offensive.

Supported by Joan Talbot, James now had every chance to win back Wotton, Symondshall and Cowley. But, a tired and sad old man, he was utterly weary of the struggle that had

blighted his entire life since the age of twenty-three ; and, to the disgust of his heir William, he signed a pact with Margaret for the rest of their joint lives. William, however, succeeding at thirty-eight in 1463, was a far more able and ambitious foe. Nine manors were not enough to give the lords of Berkeley the power and wealth to which they were accustomed. Prudently securing his step-mother Joan's support with a handsome annual settlement, he at once petitioned the new-crowned Yorkist King for the three disputed manors. Edward IV sent the petition to the Lord Chancellor, who referred it to the courts. William wisely took the precaution, while in London for the hearing, of living in sanctuary at Westminster Abbey ; and the long-drawn proceedings suddenly flared up when he accused Margaret of trying to have him murdered. One Chamberlen, a sanctuary man of Westminster, revealed to William that he had been offered by Margaret a handsome sum to accompany him, when next he journeyed back to Berkeley, and murder him on the road. Some Berkeley servants were then hidden in a secret place in the Abbey, from which they claimed to have overheard the offer urgently repeated by one of Margaret's servants. Margaret angrily denied the whole story as "too abhomonable for a Christian creature to have done" and a product of William's "sinfull imagination" ; but, before the witnesses could be examined, she died in the summer of 1468—a "yeare of jubile to this lord William, for in it death rid him of three great lady widowes . . . Countess Margaret, Duchess Alienor of Somerset (her sister) and Viscountess Jone," widow of Margaret's only son.

Courts of law were not to the taste of Thomas Talbot, second Viscount Lisle, who at the age of nineteen was now left with his young bride Margaret Herbert, daughter of the Earl of Pembroke, to carry out the last "angry charge and motherly command" of Margaret, who, besides the three manors and various rights of fishing, had bequeathed him a plan of action on which for some time she had been stealthily at work. Berkeley Castle, for a force as small as Thomas Talbot's, was virtually impregnable. But Thomas's father had found means of entry other than by direct assault. Holt, William's keeper of Whitcliff Park, the great deer park that



survives today a half mile from the castle, now began to receive by night a secret visitor—Robert Vele, Lord Lisle's engineer. And there fell into William's hands a letter—still among the Berkeley papers—from Holt to Maurice Kinge, the porter of the castle gates, reminding him of conversations they had had when they "lay together at Micheldene in one bed" and "in the Chapple out of the great chamber" at Berkeley, and asking Kinge to "geve very faythfull credence unto Mr. Robert Vele," since the "purposes" of which they had "communed" were "now . . . brought to the poynt." Kinge's share in "the matter" would be an annuity and the post of keeper at Wotton deer park. His letter having been discovered, Holt fled to Wotton Manor House ; but confessions were extracted from Maurice Kinge which revealed a plot to open by night the castle gates to Thomas Talbot.

Baulked of this plan, Thomas now taunted William to come out of his great fortress and put their quarrel to the test, either of single combat or of a pitched battle in the open between their private armies. A Talbot herald rode down to Berkeley with a written challenge ; "William, called lord Berkeley. I marveill ye come not forth with all your carts of gunnes, bowes, with oder ordinance, that yet set forward to come to my manor of Wotton to bete it down upon my head. I let you wit ye shall not nede to come soe nye. For I trust to God to mete you nere home with Englishmen of my own nation and neighbours, whereas ye by suttle craft have blown it about in diverse places of England that I should intend to bring in Welshmen for to destroy and hurt my own nation and country. I lete thee wit, I was never soe disposed, nere never will be. And to the proof hereof, I require thee of knighthood and of manhood to appoynt a day to meet me half way, there to try between God and our two hands all our quarrell and title of right, for to eschew the shedding of Christian menns blood. Or els at the same day bringe the uttermost of thy power, and I shall mete thee. An answeere of this by writinge, as ye will abide by according to the honour and order of Knighthood. Thomas Talbot the Viscount Lisle."

William answered the same day by return of herald—March 19, 1469. Security was impossible while a descendant of Mar-

garet's lived. The three manors were a first step, and Thomas a stumbling block, on the road to his great personal ambitions. The moment was opportune ; for Edward IV was fully occupied with the rebellion of his younger brother, " false, fleeting perjured Clarence," and the great Earl of Warwick had turned against the King whom he had made. As the 12th lord of Berkeley, William goaded Thomas with the Talbot's recent ennoblement and the proximity of Shrewsbury to the despised land of Wales : " Thomas Talbot, otherwise called Viscount Lisle, not longe continued in that name but a new found thing brought out of Strange Contryes. I marveill greatly at thy strange and lewd writing." But the prospect of single combat with a fanatic twenty years younger than himself did not appeal to the now middle-aged William ; and he told Thomas he knew " right well there is no such determination of land in this Relme used. And I ascertain thee that my livelode, as well my manor of Wotton as my Castle of Berkeley, be entayled to me by fine record in the king's Courts by the advice of all the Judges of this land in that dayes being." Had single combat not been out of date, however, William assured Thomas he would have been delighted to accommodate him " in every poynt that belongeth to a knight." But, " to ease " his adversary's " malicious heart," he agreed to fight a pitched battle. " Faile not tomorrow to be at Niblyes green at eight or nyne of the clock, which standeth in the borders of the livelode that thou keepest untruly from me . . . And the trouth shall be shewed by the marcy of God." He added that, far from bringing his uttermost power, he would " not bring the tenth part that " he could " make "—and then sent couriers hurtling south to Bristol to get help from its merchants, and west across the mile wide Severn to raise the foresters of Dean.

Maurice Berkeley—the eldest of William's younger brothers—was in bed at Thornbury when the urgent appeal arrived in the middle of the night, and " stole from his young wife " to ride north for the muster with all the men he could. From Bristol came his father-in-law, the merchant Philip Mead, with a fellow alderman and a band of armed servants. William's tenants and paid men-at-arms had, meanwhile been reinforced by a number of miners and foresters from the far side of the

Severn, among them Black Will, a colossus of a man and an archer of high repute. Mounting their battle chargers, the lord of Berkeley and his other brother, Thomas, now led this force out into the night. They rode along the Little Avon, its still surface shattered every few hundred yards by noisy little cataracts, and plunged into the primæval depths of Michael Wood, picking their way through the giant oaks beneath which the hounds of Thomas the Magnificent had so often hunted deer. Its eastern outskirts then stretched a good mile nearer to the Cotswolds than they do today ; and in those outskirts—close to the present site of Bush Street Farm—Lord Berkeley halted. There he was joined by Maurice and the Bristol aldermen, raising their numbers to over a thousand men ; and there they lay, concealing their great strength. Before them, soon outlined by the dawn, rose the long escarpment of the Cotswolds, rising on their left to Drakestone's Point, while on the right two precipitous and clean-cut spurs stuck out into the misty valley—Westridge Wood and Wotton Hill. But, a few yards immediately in front of where the Berkeleys lay, stands a rounded foothill, blotting out a length of the escarpment behind—Shankley Hill, its comfortable slopes still striped with the boundary marks of the manorial field system with the square tower of Nibley Church, then newly built, looking over its northern shoulder. Ten o'clock had passed, when the skyline beside Nibley Church was broken by Talbot pennants. Over the crest and down the slopes came the armoured horsemen and the dismounted Talbot tenantry—followed by a mob of small boys who swarmed up into trees to watch the fight.

William noted with satisfaction that Thomas was outnumbered. And then his archers let fly together, the horns sounded and the whole Berkeley army burst out into the open. Of the details of this battle—the last ever fought in England between two private armies—we know little. That casualties were considerable we have learned from the excavation in Victorian times of the large communal grave by Nibley Church, in which a hundred and fifty skeletons were found. We know that, for an instant, Lord Lisle raised his visor, and that, at that moment, he reeled from his saddle with Black Will's arrow in his cheek—to be stabbed to death as he lay helpless. His young

wife, who was pregnant, was waiting at Wotton Manor House for news of the fight, when suddenly, round Wotton Church and through the churchyard, surged a confused flood of Talbot retainers with the Berkeleys hard on their heels. William rushed the gates of the great manor-house, and ransacked it for the deeds and the manorial rolls that Thomas's great grandparents the Warwicks had seized at the death of Thomas the Magnificent. The whole house was in uproar. The deeds were found and William returned triumphantly to Berkeley carrying with him the Lisle arms ripped down from the wall, the roof-lead and the ovens—the latest fifteenth-century pattern—still preserved at Berkeley Castle.

Victory was complete ; for, sixteen days after Lord Lisle was slain and Wotton plundered, his widow had a miscarriage. "Thus," says the chronicler, "did all the sons joyne in revenge of the innocent bloud of that virtuous and princely lady Isabel their mother, malitiously spilt at Gloucester seaventeen yeares before by Margaret . . . for that blowe swept away all her issue male from off the earth." Lisle's widow and his sister, their relatives and their descendants, pursued the Berkeleys through the courts for 150 years. Not till the reign of James I was "the bloud spilt" at Nibley Green "clean dried up"; and a judge then remarked that successive Berkeley litigants had "beaten smooth the pavements betweene Temple barre and Westminster hall." Yet the savage feud that sprang from the facetious will of Thomas the Magnificent brought his family one tremendous benefit. It kept them so engrossed in their own private war that they took almost no part in that mass suicide of the true baronage of England—the Wars of the Roses. Historic earldoms, such as those of Devonshire and Salisbury, which had carried great martial power and great obligations, passed into the hands of the middle class officials of the Tudors, who sprouted like mushrooms from the loot of the monastery-lands. But the Berkeleys—direct descendants of the youngest of the brothers who fought at Nibley Green—still live in Berkeley Castle and hold the manors by the Severn, and their hounds today still hunt through Michael Wood and Whitchiff Park.

# THE PRINCE OF POYAIS

by Victor Allan

“The bulk of my property, merged in rich cargoes, is  
Tossing about, as you know, in my argosies  
One bound to England, another to Tripoli,  
Cyprus, Masulipatam and Bombay,  
A sixth, by the way, I consigned t’other day  
To Sir Gregor MacGregor, Cacique of Poyais,  
A country where silver’s as common as clay !”  
(Ingoldsby Legends—*The Merchant of Venice*.)

IN THE YEAR OF GEORGE IV’S ACCESSION, there came to London from the Americas, His Serene Highness Gregor the First, Sovereign Prince of the State of Poyais and its Dependencies, and Cacique of the Poyer Nation. He arrived unheralded and without ceremony but, within a few months, his name was to flash like a meteor across the skies of contemporary fame and as rapidly to pass into oblivion. Nine years before, in 1811, a young Scottish adventurer had taken ship to Venezuela at the age of twenty-five to seek his fortune in the wars of independence fought by the Spanish colonies in Latin America. His name was Gregor MacGregor, and he came of a fighting stock. His grandfather was a famous clansman, named in the Gaelic, Gregor the Beautiful, who became one of the early officers of the Black Watch and, after long years of campaigning, settled down in honourable retirement as the Laird of Inverardine, in Breadalbane. These soldierly traditions were carried to Venezuela by his grandson and namesake. A debonaire and imperious young man, he possessed a winning personality, a boundless West Highland imagination and a fiery daring that could hardly have been excelled by any of his turbulent clan. Resource and ability were his to an exceptional degree, but also a lack of scruples which transformed his many admirable qualities into a highly mischievous product of human nature. With some years of meritorious service in the British

army to commend him, the young Highlander was readily granted a commission by Simon Bolivar.

His subsequent career in the Liberator's service was dazzling. In a very short time, he was posted, with the rank of colonel, to the staff of General Miranda, then Bolivar's principal commander in the field. It was perhaps significant, in the light of subsequent events, that MacGregor should thus fall under the influence of an older man of forceful and flamboyant personality who was obsessed throughout his life by the dream of founding a new Inca empire in South America. For this, in a modified way, was to remain an inspiration to the imaginative Scot long after Francisco de Miranda, former general in the Grand Army, sometime lover of Catherine the Great, had been taken by the Spaniards and shipped to the prison of La Caracca, in Cadiz, where he spent four years collared and chained to the wall before he found clemency in death.

As time went on, Gregor MacGregor distinguished himself again and again by his courage and leadership. The staff colonel became Commandant-General of Cavalry, then General of Brigade and, finally, when he was no more than thirty, General of Division in the Army of Venezuela and New Granada. These were his days of glory, resonant with the names of battles—Onoto, Chaguarames, Quebrado-Honde, Alacran. His retreat from Ocumare, through hundreds of miles of jungle in the face of overwhelming hostile forces, was an epic of the campaigns of 1816. In the decisive defeat of the Spaniards at Juncal he played a brilliant part. Bolivar came in person to decorate him with the insignia of the Order of Libertadores, and MacGregor took advantage of his heyday of fame to marry the supreme commander's niece. Had he fallen in action about this time, he might fittingly have joined the corps d'élite of bronze horsemen riding through time amid fountains and flowers in the plazas of South America, and a great many worthy men and women would have escaped ruin and a ruthless death.

When the Spaniards at last suffered defeat on the Caribbean coasts, MacGregor, thirsty for fresh conquests and impatient of the anti-climax of peace, left Venezuela to carry on a private war of his own. Operating from sequestered bases among the

cays, he organized and led many audacious expeditions against surviving Spanish outposts. Thus he attacked and took Porto Bello, the prize of the Isthmus of Panama which had fallen to Morgan and Drake before him. Rio Hacha, one of the old treasure ports of New Granada, surrendered to his landing parties and, by a surprise attack with only two small craft and 150 men, he reduced the powerful fortress on Amelia Island, a strategic key-point commanding the shipping routes in the approaches to Florida. It did not signify that these conquests were short-lived. Long before the avenging arm of Spain could reach him, his brigs and schooners were off and away, inflicting an unexpected blow elsewhere.

Then, in the spring of 1820, he landed with a few of his associates upon the mainland of Nicaragua where, between Lat.  $12^{\circ}$  and  $15^{\circ}$  N., the low Atlantic seaboard stretches due north and south in an almost unbroken line. This was the region known as the Mosquito Coast—a swampy, pest-ridden littoral inhabited only by wandering tribes of Mosquito Indians. In the seventeenth century, these shores were the haunt of all the riff-raff of the Main and when, in 1670, certain buccaneer captains established their headquarters on the Coast, the Indians had offered to acknowledge the English sovereignty over their country in exchange for protection. Thus the territory became an unremembered English colony administered until 1788 from the vanished settlement of St. Joseph's ; in that year the coast was abandoned and the colonial establishment withdrawn. Deprived of the protection of their government, the few settlers gradually drifted away and, as time passed, the last traces of their habitations were obliterated by the ants and the jungle. This was the place—less hospitable than Crusoe's island and almost as remote—where MacGregor arrived in 1820 with a plan for re-colonization. Having apparently persuaded the aged Indian ruler to grant him a wholesale concession of territory, he left immediately for England to promote an extravagant enterprise. His sovereignty and title as Prince of Poyais—as he named his new-found dominion—were assumed en route and, with a dream of empire taking shape in his mind, he descended upon London in search of funds and subjects.

He came to a land where the times were auspicious for im-

posters. Two decades of continental warfare had impoverished and exhausted the country, and men were ready to follow any lure of fortune that promised escape from the bleakness of the post-war world. Perhaps it was because of this that MacGregor's forceful and engaging personality so easily impressed the London of 1820. Reports of his brilliant career in the Central American wars had preceded him and soon he had the world at his feet, listening to the story he had to tell. Then, like a herald of lost Atlantis, he unfolded pictures of a land fairy-like and fabulous. Poyais was a paradise where, in an atmosphere of perpetual summer, the fertile earth produced all the needs of man with hardly any occasion for labour. From majestic mountains, clothed with forests of redwood, cedar and mahogany, noble rivers flowed down to the sea over sands of virgin gold. There was gold, too, in those mountains—shining outcrops from which any man might pick a fortune with a hand-axe—and precious stones could be gathered like gravel from the hillsides. Leafy roadways traversed the country between plantations of sugar, coffee, cotton and indigo. Vast herds fattened on the prairies, the rarest fruits grew wild in profusion and exquisite birds flashed by in the sunlight. It was as though all the Utopian dreams of mankind had come true. . . . Near the mouth of a broad river spanned by splendid bridges, the capital city of the Poyaisian State looked eastward towards the Atlantic. The domes and colonnades of stately buildings flanked its tree-lined boulevards—the Royal Palace, the Parliament Buildings, the Opera House and the Cathedral. Mansions, banks and great merchant houses reflected the wealth passing through the warehouses and loading on the quaysides of the port. Here, on occasions of state, His Highness was accustomed to drive in procession, attended by a glittering company of Knights of the Green Cross, whose privilege it was to ride with the sovereign, and escorted by a bodyguard of Poyaisian Lancers, the crack corps of his army. The government was administered by three legislative houses, of which the House of Barons was supreme. Engravings of this mythical metropolis were printed and sold in thousands in the streets of London and Edinburgh.

Those were the days of imperfect cartography, and there was



room for a hundred Utopias among the empty spaces on the maps. Since it took a ship weeks, sometimes months, to make a transatlantic crossing, it was often difficult to check the accuracy of far-fetched tales of travel. But, even though we agree with Sir Thomas Browne that there will always be a "set of heads that can credit the relations of mariners", the extent of the imposture by which Gregor MacGregor ensnared the Londoners of 130 years ago seems indeed extraordinary. Pinnacle was set above pinnacle, until the very dimensions of the monstrous fabrication silenced doubt. Who, for instance, could question the discernment of the august Court of St. James's when, in formal Letters of Credence, "WE, GREGOR" extended the greeting of a brother sovereign to King George and appointed "William John Richardson, Commander of the Most Illustrious Order of the Green Cross, Major in Our Regiment of Horse Guards, to be Our Chargé d'Affaires in the United Kingdom of Great Britain"? After that diplomatic masterstroke who, indeed, could say that there was no such place as Poyais?

Before long, the story was being broadcast by every available means of propaganda. Pamphlets and books were printed; and offices were opened in London and Edinburgh where land in Poyais was sold over the counter at four shillings an acre; while Thomas Strangeways, Captain in the 1st Native Poyer Regiment and Aide-de-Camp to His Highness, produced a masterly handbook and guide to the Mosquito Shore for the use of prospective colonists. Applications poured in from all quarters and business flourished, as hired ballad singers chanted the glories of Poyais upon the pavements, and the Prince and his retinue graciously toured the country.

On 10th September, 1822, the first party of fifty settlers sailed from Leith on the ship *Honduras Packet*. Most of them were men and women of mature years and modest substance—sturdy farmers and their families who, a day or two before, had halted on the brows of heathery hills to look back on their deserted crofts in the glens; artisans and tradespeople who had sold up their businesses and shuttered their shops; and a sprinkling of professional men upon whom Prince Gregor had bestowed appointments as state officials. There, in uniform coat

and kerseymere breeches, stood Lieutenant-Colonel Hall, proceeding overseas to take up the important office of Chief of the Civil Department. There, flushed with enthusiasm, was young Mr. Andrew Picken, for whom a word of recommendation in an influential quarter had procured a clerkship in the same department, with the promise of a cornetcy in the Poyaisian Lancers if he should wish to exchange into military service later on. For their greater convenience upon landing they had exchanged their honest Scottish coin for notes payable at the Bank of Poyais, of which some 70,000 had been printed in Edinburgh. Now they followed their belongings into the boats and were rowed out to the waiting ship. Presently, with anchors awash, the vessel came alive and the green-crossed standard of Poyais dipped from her formast halyards in response to farewell cheers. Eager, hopeful and completely unsuspecting, the little band of pioneers sailed out into the misty firth and followed their mirage westward to the swamps of Nicaragua.

The snowball of deception set rolling by MacGregor had now gathered unmanageable speed and proportions. With further sailings to be organized and financed, soaring expenses to be met and an expanding army of agents and functionaries to be rewarded, the Prince found himself short of funds. He accordingly approached the banking house of Perring & Company at No. 72, Cornhill, in the City of London, with a proposal for the flotation of a loan to his government. Its principal, Sir John Perring, was a former Lord Mayor and one of the City's most experienced men of affairs, and it is strange that his shrewd wits failed to detect the swindle. But, as the banker may have reasoned, here was a man whose claims were admitted in the highest quarters, whose address and bearing supported him in every particular, whose agents were everywhere and whose ships were even now on the high seas, conveying persons of quality and repute to eminent positions in his service. And, of course, there would be some profitable underwriting and handsome fees accruing to the issuing house. Sir John went the way of the rest and, early in the year 1823, his company sponsored a loan of £200,000 at the issue price of 80 per cent, secured upon the general resources of the State of Poyais. The issue was a notable success. Stockholders were granted the

option of exchanging their bonds at any time for freehold land in Poyais of an equivalent value, and thousands rushed to take up the scrip. For MacGregor, nothing could go awry!

Meanwhile, the ship *Honduras Packet* had made her landfall on the Mosquito Coast and stood in to the mouth of the Black River. On her decks, excited emigrants, attired for landing in their best coats, gowns and bonnets, strained their eyes for a first glimpse of the towers and spires of the Poyaisian capital. She anchored off the bar, hoisted her colours and fired a gun—waiting for port authorities and pilot. She waited in vain. Her passengers found themselves upon an uninhabited shore, shimmering in heat, silent and menacing. Believing themselves to be merely astray, they disembarked and commenced unloading their stores and belongings while some of the men set off into the interior to find the city. To complicate matters, another vessel arrived from Scotland bringing 150 men, women and children who, with the first contingent, made upwards of 200 people. Then, before half their goods had been landed, a hurricane swept the coast and the two ships were carried out to sea, leaving the settlers stranded, with ruin upon them and death near by. Shelterless, with their baggage scattered around them and their homely sticks of furniture blistering in the heat of the Caribbean beach, they made a makeshift encampment and desperate parties set off along the coast to seek help. But the rainy season was approaching, sickness spread rapidly among them, and before long the entire company succumbed to malaria and yellow fever. The tragic facts were recorded by a survivor, Mr. Edward Lowe, of No. 6, Stafford Place, Pimlico. "Not one", he wrote, "was able to assist another out of such a number, and many of those who had newly come from Scotland were well advanced in years and had come here to end their days in peace and comfort."

News of their predicament eventually reached the British colony of Honduras, 500 ocean miles to the northward, and General Edward Codd, the Governor, at once despatched a schooner to their assistance, while the British population of Belize prepared to receive and nurse the sick. Several were already dead, but the survivors were rescued in relays and brought to the colony. Even then, the total mortality exceeded

two-thirds of the original number. And this was only a beginning. Other shiploads were on the way, and steps had to be taken by the authorities in Honduras to intercept and warn the newcomers before they were cast ashore. Indeed, during the greater part of the ensuing year, the colonial administration had its hands full with the problems of succouring and repatriating the victims of this gigantic hoax. In all, seven emigrant ships sailed from various ports in the British Isles for that sinister coast of disillusion.

While this was going on, MacGregor and his entourage had quietly transferred themselves to France, where they seem to have been equally successful in deluding the public. By 1825, a number of companies had been formed in Paris for the purpose of exploiting the riches of Poyais ; and, in September of that year, a French expedition sailed from Le Havre. Moreover, operating from the security of his new Parisian headquarters, the Prince contracted with the London financial house of Thomas Jenkins & Company, of 39, Lothbury, for the issue of a further Poyais loan for no less a sum than £300,000, secured upon the revenue of the imaginary gold mines of Paulaza. There must have been many who knew the truth by this time, but it is recorded in the chronicles of the Stock Exchange that great excitement attended the flotation and that many rash investors bought the stock.

MacGregor remained on the Continent until 1827 when for some reason—possibly because he found Paris too hot to hold him—he returned to London. He was promptly arrested and imprisoned in Tothill Fields. But his amazing luck held good. He may have had friends at court, or perhaps greater names than his were involved. Whatever the reason, the damning case against him was dropped and he was shortly set free. He wasted no time in returning to Paris where baffled justice received a sop by his confinement for a brief period in the prison of La Force. Again restored to liberty, he seems to have lived quietly in France for several years on what remained of his plunder. But by now this was not considerable. Many others had shared the spoils, and vast sums had been squandered in the extravaganza of royal state which he had maintained for so long, and in chartering and fitting out the emigrant ships to

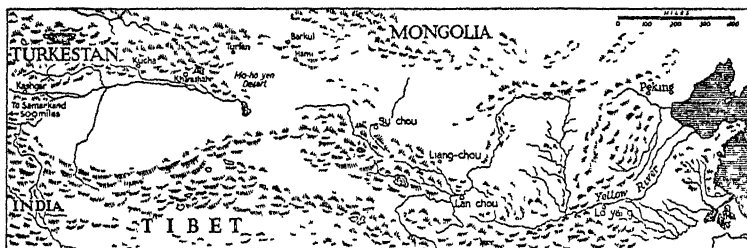
Nicaragua. By 1839, his money and friends had gone, and he appealed to the Venezuelan Government for naturalization and restoration to his former military rank, submitting a statement of his services in the War of Independence under Bolivar, and a memorial of his "subsequent misfortunes". His old comrade, General Carlos Soublette, who had shared with him the perils of the famous march from Ocumare, was prominent among the leaders of the Republic, and his request was granted. He set out forthwith for Venezuela where he was reinstated in the rank of General of Division and awarded a pension.

There is no moral to this story. Indeed, there could scarcely be a more unmoral tale, for it makes game of all rightful beliefs in the rewards of virtue and the retribution which befalls the evil-doer. Gregor MacGregor's star had never failed him. The wheel had swung full circle and had brought him back to the service to which he had pledged his mercenary sword twenty-eight years before. A career which, with no miscarriage of justice, might have ended under the dark walls of Newgate came to a close instead in the sunlight of Caracas, where, in 1845, he died at the age of fifty-nine, leaving a name honoured, at least, in the rolls of the Army of Venezuela.

# A CHINESE POET IN CENTRAL ASIA

*by* Arthur Waley

WHAT, YOU MAY WELL ASK on reading the title of this paper, induced the Chinese (whose own country is, Heaven knows, large enough) to push out into remote regions, from which they were separated by immense tracts of desert? The main reason was an economic one. And here we are not, as so often with regard to economic motives in ancient times, simply left guessing. We are specifically told that the attack on Turfan in A.D. 639, a hundred years before the time of our poet, was made because the Turfanese were preventing caravans from the West from reaching China. This did not interfere with China's basic economy ; as regards food and clothing China was self-sufficient. The trade in question was one in luxury articles such as perfumes, jewels and drugs. On these the Chinese levied heavy import-duties which were an important source of public revenue. There were, however, for the seventh century conquest of Turkestan, political as well as commercial reasons. The T'ang dynasty, which had just come into power, followed upon a number of short-lived dynasties, most of which only ruled over part of China. There were still people alive who had lived under four or five successive dynasties and few people can have seen any reason to suppose that the new dynasty would last any longer than its predecessors. It was necessary to get people to think of the T'ang dynasty as a régime that had "come to stay", to equate it in their minds with, for example, the Han dynasty which had ruled for over four hundred years (c.200 B.C. to A.D. 200). The best way to make clear the parallel was to re-enact the Central Asian conquests of the Han dynasty ; loyal documents of the period constantly congratulate the T'ang Emperor on having done so. Similarly, one of the motives for the recent Chinese occupation of Tibet (nominally undertaken in order to free the Tibetans from Americo-Imperialist Oppression) was no doubt



THE ROUTE TO TURKESTAN

in reality to assert equality with the last great dynasty, the Ch'ing, who conquered Tibet in the eighteenth century.

What made occupation of Turkestan possible in the seventh century was the break-up of the great Turkish confederation (the Western Turks) which had till recently controlled the whole area from Mongolia to the Caspian and beyond. Similarly, the break-up of an earlier nomad power, the Hun confederacy, had enabled Chinese armies to march into Turkestan in Han times.

It must not be supposed that the attack in 639 met with universal approval. We know, in fact, that a number of officials drew up a joint protest, declaring that a campaign carried on so many thousand miles away could not succeed, and that even if Turfan were eventually taken it could not be held. They proved to be quite wrong. The expedition won an easy victory and, as we shall see, over a hundred years later the Chinese were still in Turfan.

So much by way of historical introduction. Now let us turn to our poet, through whose verses we shall learn something of what it felt like to be keeping open vital trade communications, for the benefit of the exchequer, three thousand miles away from home. The poet Ts'ên Shên was born in A.D. 715, into a family that had produced three Ministers of State in the last hundred years. At the age of nineteen he presented to the Examination authorities, as a recognized alternative to sitting for the Literary Examinations, some of his essays and poems ; but they were not accepted. In the years that followed he married, travelled in various parts of northern China and worked at the prescribed examination subjects. In the winter

of 743, just before going in for the Literary Examinations, he addressed to some person of influence a prose-and-verse composition (*fu*) describing the past splendours of the Ts'ên family and in a veiled way asking his patron to put in a word for him with the examiners. For candidates to solicit support of this kind was a general practice. Ts'ên Shên had a particular reason for doing so. His grandfather and great-uncle had both rendered conspicuous services to the dynasty. The great-uncle had indeed died a martyr to his loyalty; for he resisted the attempts of the Empress Wu Hou to set up a new dynasty and was executed during the period of her usurpation, along with his five sons: "She shattered our house," he says; "she destroyed our clan." But after the restoration of the legitimate régime (the T'ang) an uncle of Ts'ên Shên's was accused in 713 of intriguing against the accession to the Throne of the reigning Emperor, Ming Huang. One object of Ts'ên Shên's composition was to remove the prejudice against him that the régime might feel in consequence of his uncle's offence. "It was as the result of concerted slander and false denunciation," he writes, "that my uncle the Duke of Ju-nan was punished by the Son of Heaven." The appeal seems to have worked, for in the spring (744) he duly passed the examination. He was given a small clerical appointment in the administration of the Crown Prince's Bodyguard. For five years he seems to have got no promotion. Some desperate step was necessary if he were ever going to make his way in the world, and he accepted a secretarial post on the Staff of General Kao Hsien-chih who, in 749, was back in Chang-an (the capital) after his famous campaign in the Pamirs. I say "desperate step" because service even a few hundred miles from the capital was regarded as exile, and General Kao had been appointed Governor-General of An-hsi region, with its centre at Kucha, many thousand miles away to the west, in what is now Turkestan. In 751 General Kao went back to Chang-an to report and was moved to a post at Liang-chou in Kansu, considerably nearer home. His Staff (including Ts'ên Shên) went to Liang-chou expecting the General to join them there. But in the early summer there was a rumour that the natives of Turkestan had appealed to the Arabs to come and liberate them from Chinese rule. General



Kao raised an army of 30,000 men and marched against the Arabs, who were advancing from Samarkand. While Kao was besieging Talas, some 200 miles east of Samarkand, the Karluk Turks (who were nominally on the side of the Chinese) revolted and came to raise the siege of Talas. General Kao decided to retreat under cover of night. In the darkness his troops got out of touch with their officers and the retreat became disorderly. It is probable that the Arabs captured a considerable number of stragglers. We know at any rate that Tu Huan, afterwards the author of a famous geographical work, fell into the hands of the Arabs, ultimately made his way to the "Western Ocean" (presumably the Persian Gulf) and got back to Canton by sea. Kao Hsien-chih himself seems to have abandoned his troops and to have fled precipitately to the east. The scattered contingents were rallied by his second-in-command, Li Ssu-yeh, who led them back to their headquarters at Kucha.

We are told by Al-Thaalibi (A.D. 961 to 1038) that the Chinese prisoners taken by the Arabs taught the inhabitants of Samarkand, who had hitherto written on papyrus and parchment, how to make paper, an art of crucial importance to the Arabs, who were on the eve of becoming a great literary nation.

The Arabs did not follow up their victory. Their own internal situation was chaotic. Only a year before the battle of Talas the Abbassids had set up a new dynasty with its capital at Bagdad. The generals who put the Abbassids into power were in 751 already quarrelling among themselves. In 752-3 Abu Muslim, the general chiefly responsible for the rise of the Abbassids, was suspected of separatist tendencies, and Ziyad (the victor at Talas) was ordered to revolt against him. The revolt failed, and Ziyad was beheaded. Abu Muslim was lured by the Abbassids to a conference in Bagdad in 755, and treacherously assassinated. Chinese and Moslems did not, so far as I can recollect, meet in battle again for many centuries.

Whether Ts'ên Shên was present at the siege of Talas we do not know. The fact that he does not allude to it proves nothing, as the subject was one which it would have been indiscreet to mention. He may, of course, have been left behind at

Kucha or somewhere else on Kao Hsien-chih's lines of communication. His only allusion to the episode is contained in a poem addressed to a certain Censor Hsüeh who was apparently also a member of the disgraced General's Staff :

Now that the General has fallen into disgrace  
What is to become of those that were clients at his gate?

Ts'ên Shên returned to China and passed the years 752 and 753 in Chang-an, so far as we know, without a job. It was at this time, however, that he got to know the famous poet Tu Fu, whose friendship was later so advantageous to him. In the autumn of 752 Ts'ên Shên, Tu Fu, Ch'u Kuang-hsi and Kao Shih, together with another less famous poet, climbed the pagoda of the Monastery of Maternal Love, where a hundred years before the pilgrim Hsüan-tsang (Tripitaka) had worked, and each wrote a poem to commemorate the visit. Here is Ts'ên Shên's poem :

Like a jet of water this tower springs from earth,  
Lonely and high, brushing the palaces of Heaven.  
As we climb the steps we leave the World of Men ;  
The stone stairway winds in an open void  
Its looming presence daunts our holy land ;  
Its storeyed heights seem made by demon skill  
Its four corners block the light of the sun ,  
Its seven storeys brush the vault of the sky.  
I look down, to point at the highest bird ;  
I raise my head to listen to the startling wind  
Mountain chains, like wave on wave of the sea,  
Hurry forward, bearing their tribute to the West.  
Green sophoras flank the Imperial Road ;  
Faultless in beauty stand the mansions of the great. . .

And the poet ends with the resolution, so common in poems of this kind, to give up official life and devote himself to Buddhism. The poem that Tu Fu wrote on the same occasion is much less plain-sailing. It is full of mythological allusions which are themselves apparently veiled allusions to current events ; but as regards the real meaning of the poem commentators are hopelessly at variance.

In 754 Ts'ên Shên decided to try his fortunes once more in the west and managed to attach himself to the Staff of General Fêng Chang-ch'ing who had just been given a command at Pei-t'ing, north of Turfan, near the modern town of Guchen, in north-eastern Turkestan. Among Ts'ên Shên's other functions was now that of Inspector Censor (8th Rank, second Class) and (later on) Assistant Commissioner of Expenses in Pei-t'ing and Kucha. Next year (755) he was chiefly at Pei-t'ing and Lun-t'ai near Urumchi, the modern capital of Turkestan. Some of the places that he now visited and about which he wrote poems he had probably already seen in 750 and 751. But for convenience I will deal with them here. We will begin with the Moho-yen desert, on the way between the Kansu frontier and Hami, "a wilderness of gravel and crumbling rock, with a width of over 200 miles".<sup>1</sup> This was the desert that the pilgrim Hsüan-tsang crossed in 630, all alone, plagued by phantom hosts and demon voices, without water for four nights and five days. "An endless prospect of fearfully barren desert," writes the Swedish traveller Sven Hedin, one thousand three hundred years after Ts'ên Shên's time, "not a blade of grass and not a trace of any wild animal; only a deathly silence."<sup>2</sup> It was here that Ts'ên Shên wrote the famous quatrain:

Over the desert I saw the sun rise,  
Under the desert I saw the sun sink  
And to get here I travelled ten thousand leagues.  
What thing is fame that we buy it with journeys such as this?

Much of his time in Central Asia was spent at Turfan, an oasis which though it is at a considerably more northern latitude than Peking, has a tropical climate, with temperatures of over 130 Fahrenheit; for it lies, in part at any rate, more than three hundred feet below sea-level. The German traveller von Le Coq speaks of the "bare red hills, strangely rent and torn" which surround this depression. They are the Fiery Mountains (*Huo Shan*) of our poet.

<sup>1</sup> Aurel Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, Vol. 2, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> Sven Hedin, *The Sino-Swedish Expedition*, Vol. 3, p. 234.

I came at evening to the city of Chiao-ho<sup>3</sup>;  
 The Fiery Mountains loomed jagged and red.  
 It was late autumn, but still my sweat flowed ;  
 A flaming wind swept the sandy dust.  
 How comes it that Maker of Wet and Dry  
 To this one place sends no rain or snow?

Or again, when crossing these mountains :

Their red flames burn the Tartar clouds,  
 Their blazing fumes scorch the desert's void

Turfan at that time had a population of about 50,000, of whom only a small proportion were Chinese. Christian, Manicheans and Buddhists lived side by side. Its products were carpets, myrrh, grape-wine and punch. In photographs the great streets seem at first glance to be intact. Then, as one looks, like a mummy exposed to a sudden light the town dissolves and one sees a picture of endless ruins, projecting no more than a few feet above the ground.

Much of his time was spent at Lun-t'ai (" Wheel Terrace "), about 100 miles north-west of Turfan :

At Lun-t'ai everything is strange,  
 For in ancient times this was the land of the Huns  
 In the third month there is no green grass,  
 At every homestead white elms grow  
 The native books use a strange script,  
 The people of the place have a language of their own.  
 Looking westward, to the north of the Flowing Sands,  
 I gaze sadly at a jutting corner of the lake

The language of Lun-t'ai was almost certainly Tocharian, an independent Indo-European language, having affinities with Latin, Greek, Celtic and Germanic. It has the air of a sort of natural Esperanto. An ox is *okso* ; the word for " new " is *nu*. The script (Brahmi) came from India. The mention, in this and other poems, of a lake near Lun-t'ai might help to identify its site ; but lakes in Turkestan have a way of appearing and disappearing in the course of the centuries.

<sup>3</sup> Now Yarkhoto, west of the present town of Turfan

Ts'ên Shên writes again :

In a strange land, beyond the Yin-shan,  
In a lonely town by the side of a snowy lake  
Where autumn brings only the wild geese,  
Where all summer the cricket never sings—  
A brush of rain and the carpeted walls drip,  
A puff of wind, and the felt awnings stink—  
At Lun-t'ai, ten thousand leagues from home,  
How little has happened in all these three years !

At Lun-t'ai, too, was written the " Snowy Song made when seeing off Assessor Wu on his return to the capital " :

The north winds coil the earth, the pale grasses break ;  
The Tartar sky in the eighth month is made of flying snow.  
Suddenly (as when in one night the spring wind comes—  
On a thousand trees, ten thousand trees the pear blossom opens)  
It finds its way through the bed-curtains and wets the gauze hangings,  
The fox-fur quilt gives no warmth, the padded coat feels thin,  
The Army-leader cannot draw his horn-spliced bow,  
The Governor-General's iron cuirass is too cold to wear  
From the fencing along the desert lake the ice hangs yard on yard,  
Ten thousand leagues of dreary cloud are packed stark and still.  
Here in the camp we set wine and drink to the departing guest ;  
The pipa sounds, the violin and the Tibetan flute  
Thick, thick the evening snow falls on the camp gate,  
The wind tears at the red banners, frozen too stiff to flap  
To the eastern gate of Lun-t'ai we come to see you off,  
And as you go snow fills the road to the T'ien Shan.  
A turn of the hill, a bend of the road and you are lost to sight ;  
All that is left is the track on the snow where your horses hoofs trod.

Writing of the defile just to the west of Kharashahr Sir Aurel Stein says that at the narrowest point " a wooden gate across the road, with troglodyte quarters for a guard, marks a watch-station still in being."<sup>4</sup> This was what the Chinese in ancient days called the Iron Gate Pass. In a poem called " Inscribed

<sup>4</sup> *Serindia*, p. 1228.

upon the tower of the Iron Gate Pass" Ts'ên Shên, evoking a strangely similar image, describes the same spot :

The Iron Gate, at the limit of the Western World !  
Scarcely a traveller, far as the eye can see.  
At the pass gate a solitary watchman stands  
All day, facing the rock wall.  
The bridge bestrides a chasm of a thousand feet,  
The road winds pressed between tall cliffs  
I go up to the western tower and look ;  
A look is enough to make one's hair turn grey

In " At the rest-house to the west of the Silver Mountain Desert ", also near Kharashahr, he writes :

At the mouth of the Silver Mountain Desert the wind is sharp  
as an arrow :  
To the west of the Iron Gate Pass the moon shines white as  
floss  
Two by two my sorrowing tears wet my horse's mane ,  
With hiss on hiss the Tartar sands slash the rider's face.  
But a hale man, still in his thirties, cannot be content  
Without wealth, without rank, to pore over ink-slab and  
brush

These are all private poems, not meant for the eye of his superior officers or of authorities at the capital, but addressed to equals and friends. In them he is free to express the feelings of loneliness and horror that the deserts and vast snow-ranges inspired, feeling akin to those of early European travellers when they crossed the Alps. He makes no attempt to hide the fact that he is here merely to mend his fortunes and would far rather be leading an unadventurous life at home. Quite different (and wholly without interest as literature, though they fill in some gaps in our historical knowledge) are the conventional poems of flattery that the addresses to superiors such as the Generals Kao Hsien-chih and Fêng Chang-ch'ing. These speak only of victories, of glory, of extending the might of the dynasty, of whole nomad tribes surrendering with their tents and flocks and camels, of feats surpassing those of legendary conquerors in early days.

But to return to his private life in the oases, all was not sadness. In many poems there are allusions to the feasting, music and dancing that went on at these isolated Chinese camps and Government-houses. In a poem written at Lun-t'ai (which, as we have seen, was near the modern Urumchi) he says "Here in the camp we have set wine. It is night ; we beat the drums. Brocaded mats, red candles, the moon not yet full risen. The Uighur General is good at native songs ; the foreign prince from Shê River (north-west of Lun-t'ai) can talk to us in Chinese."

The natives of Central Asia were and are great dancers and musicians. They were numerous in the towns of western Kansu, and their music dominated that part of China. "One out of every two natives is a *pipa* player," writes Ts'ên Shên, speaking of Liang-chou. At Kan-chou, further west, he saw Governor T'ien's girls dance the Whirling Dance called "Like the Lotus Flower". Turkestan is still famous for many forms of whirling dance. In this variety the girls whirled round long poles which they planted now to the right, now to the left, accompanied by the music of *pipa* and flute. Ts'ên Shên found the music incomparable. It made "Gathering the Lotus" and "Falling Plum-blossom" (two famous Chinese tunes) "seem (as he says) mere senseless din." But above all, the dancing amazed him : "the dancing that is commonly taught", he says, "is dancing and nothing more. It does not aspire to postures such as these." To this we might, of course, object that dancing ought to be "dancing and nothing more" and that Ts'ên Shên showed bad taste in preferring acrobatics.

The documents brought back from Tun-huang, the starting point for caravans taking the southern route across the desert, by Aurel Stein, Pelliot and others tell us a great deal about the administrative and religious life of Chinese officials there, but very little about their social life. Ts'ên Shên has a poem about a party given by a Governor of Tun-huang :

When the moon came out over the town wall and stars filled  
the sky

Wine was set in his inner room, brocade mats were spread.  
His singing girls, freshly rouged, all looking their best,

Droop sideways their tall coiffures, to stick in the golden pins  
While he sits drunk they hide his belt-clasp in front of the red  
candle :

"I can't imagine what has become of that belt-clasp of  
mine".

This may possibly refer to the New Year game of guessing  
which guest is holding a belt-clasp in his closed fist.

Another Governor, this time at Su-chou, a little further  
east, enlivens his dinner-party by dancing the sword-dance.  
But soon the Tartar pipers burst in with their shrill tune, re-  
minding the guests of how far they were from their homes  
and, as often happens at the end of Chinese poems, "their  
tears fell like rain". We find him on another occasion feasting  
with a General Kai in "a warm room with embroidered  
curtains and a glowing ground-stove : the walls covered with  
woven stuffs, the floor with patterned rugs." Young ladies are  
straining the wine into jade cups and scattering here, there and  
everywhere a profusion of bronze bowls full of wild-camel  
cream. They wear purple sashes and have gold slashings on  
their coats. The poet asks who they are and is told they are  
merely the General's "ordinary household slaves".

In the winter of 755 the An Lu-shan revolution broke out :  
Lo-yang, the eastern capital, fell after a few weeks' fighting,  
and the T'ang dynasty seemed to be on the point of collapsing.  
Ts'ên Shên must have heard the news early in 756, but in the  
summer of that year we find him unconcernedly cultivating  
his garden. "In the year *ching-shên* of the T'ien-pao period  
he writes, "when I was . . . Assistant Commissioner for Ex-  
penses at Hami, Turfan and Pei-t'ing, my business left me  
a great deal of leisure and in the garden of the Government  
House I planted trees, grew medicinal herbs, made hillocks,  
dug ponds and found it an agreeable distraction enough to  
potter about among them." In a rare wild flower brought to  
him by a colleague from "south of the T'ien Shan," Ts'ên  
Shên saw a symbol of his own unhappy destiny. Just as the  
flower, unknown in China, had wasted its fragrance and  
beauty in a sequestered fold of the hills, so Ts'ên Shên was  
wasting his best years in obscure employment at a remote  
frontier town. He describes the flower at some length, but I



have not succeeded in identifying it.<sup>5</sup> In the late summer, however, events at home took an even more serious turn. The rebels captured the capital, Chang-an, and at the end of the year we find Ts'ên Shên on his way back to China.

My main object in this essay has been to give some account of his life in Central Asia and of the poems written there. But you will perhaps be glad to have a brief account of his subsequent career.

Ming Huang had abdicated in the autumn of 756. In 757 his son Su Tsung was at Fêng-hsiang, about a hundred miles west of Chang-an, collecting forces for a counter-attack against the rebels. Many Chinese officials had been captured or were cut off from access to Fêng-hsiang. It was necessary to set up some sort of skeleton administration. The usual Civil Service examinations could not, of course, be held and posts were given in a haphazard way to such members of the governing class as happened to be on the spot. It was an opportunity not to be missed, and in the late spring or early summer of 757 Ts'ên Shên presented himself at the new Emperor's headquarters. Here he met his old friend the poet, Tu Fu, who had escaped from occupied Chang-an and had at last (he had never succeeded in passing the examinations) under these exceptional circumstances managed to secure a tolerably good post. In the sixth month Tu Fu and some other friends recommended Ts'ên Shên as one who had "early established a reputation for clear judgment and sound principles and was highly respected by his contemporaries". In consequence of this recommendation he was made *pu-chüeh* ("pointer-out of defects") in the Grand Secretariate. He was now Seventh Rank, Second Class; none too good a position for a man of 43.

It was the custom, on the ninth day of the ninth month, for those who were away from home to climb the nearest hill, drink together and look towards their native land. On this day, in 757, Ts'ên Shên wrote what is perhaps his best-known poem. The sense is:

<sup>5</sup> I wish to thank Sir Edward Salisbury, Director of Kew Gardens, for his kindness in trying to get this plant identified for me. The description sounds like the Belladonna lily.

I should dearly love to clumb to some high place,  
 Had I only a friend to bid me drink wine  
 Piteous to remember that in far Chang-an  
 My chrysanthemums are flowering beside a battlefield

It is not poetry in English ; but one could only give it rhyme and lyric form at the cost of misrepresenting the meaning.

In the winter of 757 Chang-an was retaken from the rebels and the Court moved back. After two years Ts'ên Shên was given a post in the Sixth Rank, and shortly afterwards he became Senior Officer (*chang-shih*) at Kuo-chou, near the modern Ling-pao, in Honan. This, too, was nominally a move up, as the post belonged to the Fifth Rank. But it was one that at this period was generally given to administrators who had got into trouble of some kind, and this was clearly Ts'ên Shên's case, for he speaks of himself as "awaiting punishment" at Kuo-chou. On the wall of the Kuo-chou commandery he wrote :

Throughout my life all my plans have failed ·  
 I have tripped and tumbled till now my hair is grey  
 I have plotted and schemed, but all to no effect ,  
 My wife and children must share in my disgrace  
 But though our Enlightened Ruler has cast me aside  
 A loyal heart still beats in my breast.  
 When sadness comes, having nowhere else to go,  
 I climb to the upper storey of the Western Tower.

Whether his wife had remained in occupied Chang-an or had escaped to the south we do not know. The above poem perhaps indicates that she was with him at Kuo-chou. He had a son called Tso-kung of whom, however, nothing is known.

He was at Kuo-chou till the spring of 762. He then returned to Chang-an and held, in rapid succession, a great number of small posts including one in the Crown Prince's Household and one in the Household of the Emperor. In 764 he became Secretary of the Department of Forestry. It was typical of China's highly literary and idealistic civilization that an office of this kind, dealing solely with material affairs, should have been considered as of little importance. The Secretary was the head of the department, but he

belonged only to the Fifth Rank, Second Class. We might justifiably be surprised that such a post should be given to someone who presumably lacked all technical knowledge or previous experience of forestry, were it not that our own attitude towards the filling of such posts is almost as frivolous as that of the ancient Chinese.

In 765 he was transferred to a slightly higher position (Secretary to the Arsenal). Then, at the end of the year, he got his first Governorship. His district was Chia-chou, near Mount Omi, in Szechwan. Governors of important districts were in the Third Rank, but Chia-chou was only a Middling District and its Governor belonged to the Fourth Rank. For the moment the appointment turned out to be purely nominal. A fresh insurrection was going on in Szechwan and after reaching Han-chung in southern Shensi he was obliged to return to Chang-an. In 766 the great statesman and soldier Tu Hung-chien (709-769) was entrusted with the task of quelling the Szechwan rebellion. He took Ts'ên Shên on to his civilian Staff and they reached Ch'êng-tu, the capital of Szechwan, in the autumn. Tu Hung-chien's campaign was successful and in the summer of 767 Ts'ên Shên was at last able to take up his Governorship at Chia-chou. Tu Fu, who was lying ill at Yün-an, in eastern Szechwan, sent him a present of carp.<sup>6</sup> They had corresponded, but had not met for nearly ten years. So far as we know they never met again. In 768 Ts'ên Shên was recalled to the capital, but at Jung-chou on the Yangtze he was held up by a fresh insurrection. In a poem called "Held up by bandit forces between Lü-chou and Jung-chou", after describing the reign of terror set up along the Yangtze River by these fugitives from the battle areas in the north, he warns them that Government troops are at hand and he calls upon them to repent while there is still time. "It is with sadness that I think of you", he says, "for I know that you are doomed men." The poem is extremely like several written by Tu Fu at this period, and it may be that besides sending fish to Ts'ên Shên he had also sent some of his recent verse.

<sup>6</sup> Carp is often a literary equivalent for "letter"; but the context makes it clear that this really was a fish.

Giving up the attempt to get to Chang-an Ts'ên Shên went north, to Ch'êng-tu, where he fell ill and died in the early days of 770. Tu Fu died in the autumn or early winter of the same year. Ts'ên Shên's Central Asian poems have, of course, a considerable value from an ethnological, historical and topographical point of view. I have indeed confined myself mainly to his frontier poems not because of their documentary interest, but because the Western Regions with their strange alternation of featureless desert, luxuriant oases and gigantic snow-peaks, moved him profoundly and wrang from him poems of a vividness and intensity rare in the poetry of his day. Another feature of these poems which at any rate makes it relatively easy to convey some impression of them in English is their freedom from literary allusion. A poet writing in Central China was at every turn reminded of local celebrities and their legends, of historical events and of previous poems written in the same locality. The poetic impact of his surroundings lost its freshness and became veiled by a cloud of historical references and literary allusions. The Turfan region had no such associations. "From ancient times till now few poets have been on the frontier", Ts'ên Shên himself writes, and apart from a few poems written near Lake Barkul by a well-known poet called Lo Pin-wang, some eighty years earlier, so far as I know no Chinese poet had written about Turkestan. A poem such as the one about the Iron Gate Pass near Kharashahr, recording a vivid momentary and completely personal impression, would have been impossible to write in China where, at such a geographical key-point, a medley of historical and literary reminiscences would inevitably have intervened between the poet and his subject.

I must not close this essay without paying a tribute to Wên I-to, the great scholar who was assassinated in 1946 by Kuo Min Tang extremists. It is upon his researches into the chronology of Ts'ên Shên that this essay is largely based.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Vol 3 of the Collected Works published after Wên I-to's death.

## MASHAM OF OTES

*by Peter Laslett*

THE WORD OTES APPEARS ON OUR Ordnance Survey maps in the archaic lettering reserved for ruins and for ancient monuments. It is about 25 miles to the N.E. of London somewhere in the midst of that seemingly aimless tangle of by-roads and tracks which form the communications of the county of Essex. The nearest church is at High Laver, a crooked mile or so away to the south-east and the nearest hamlet at Matching in the opposite direction, but for a proper village and a real road it is necessary to go five or six miles westwards to Harlow. Otes in fact is out of the way, more isolated now than perhaps ever before in its history.

On the site itself there are neither ruined walls nor those tell-tale humps of coarse green grass to justify the title given by the map makers, although in the next field lie the fallen timbers of a farm building with carving on its spandrels. But two magnificent lime trees stand the one behind the other on the open side of a square-shaped mound, surrounded on the other sides by a thick hedgerow and a ditch, a steep ditch where in places the standing water glistens through the thick foliage. In the turf itself a piece or two of good old red brick are to be found, and the whole site slopes down on its open side towards a muddy marsh, formed, it soon becomes clear, by the stopping up of a tiny stream.

To the historian this is evidence enough. In this place there must have stood in succession three buildings. First, a mediaeval moated house, moated like so many other Essex houses because in this gently rolling country it was the obvious defence: second, a Tudor manor house built in the deep red brick which serves hereabouts for stone: and finally, an eighteenth century gentleman's seat, with its carefully planted trees and its prospect over an ornamental lake. And so it proves. In Chapman & Andrews' fine maps of Essex, pub-



*By courtesy of the Essex Record Office*

#### OTES

*(The original of this print has not been traced. It is taken from the reproduction of "a scarce print" published in the "Essex Review" in 1905)*

lished in 1777, the name "Oates" marks in this position the plan of a substantial house, complete with its drive to the Matching road, its lodges, its gardens and its lake, and beside it the name of the gentleman resident—Lord Masham.

The Mashams came originally from Yorkshire and the foundations of their fortunes as an Essex county family were laid, typically, by a London merchant, Alderman William Masham. It was his son who became seated at Otes, in the high gabled dwelling house forming the left wing of the building in the picture above. In 1621 he bought one of James I's baronetcies, and he married one of Oliver Cromwell's cousins. By the year 1690, their son, Sir Francis Masham of

Otes, 3rd Baronet, "had so great interest in this county that he was chosen one of the Knights of the Shire" to represent it in Parliament. Although he was only forty-five, Sir Francis already had eight sons and at least one daughter by his first wife, and another son by his second wife, whom he had married four years before. So far it had been the customary story of a Stuart landed family rising in the world, but not in this case to great wealth. The Mashams never owned more than three or four manors and their Tudor manor house was small. It was evident by 1690 that Sir Francis was going to find it difficult to provide for such a band of growing sons, but he was not without his expedients for he was able to find a place at court for Samuel, the youngest of his first family and likely for that reason to have the worst chance of them all. It was indeed a very minor position, for it was in the household of the Princess Anne and her consort, Prince George of Denmark; however, the recent Revolution had made the Princess Heir Apparent to the throne of William and Mary.

It was the marriages made by the Mashams which were to give to their history its extraordinary twist. The first match made by Sir Francis Masham had been with an Anglo-French lady, the daughter of an English Knight seated at Rouen in Normandy, and as a consequence the household at Otes had become bilingual. The second Lady Masham belonged to an even more interesting and extraordinary society, the handful of women isolated from the rest of their sex in the masters' lodges of the Colleges of Cambridge. Little has been written about the lives of these wives and daughters incongruously scattered in the midst of institutions so emphatically masculine and so imperatively celibate, and Damaris Masham is one of the few whose biography and personality are known to historians. Her father was the famous scholar Dr. Ralph Cudworth, Master of Christ's College, and, brought up within the circle of theologians and philosophers which we now know as the Cambridge Platonists, she herself had become a theologian, the friend and correspondent of the intellectuals of her day. We do not know how she came to marry this hard-headed but somewhat stupid Essex gentleman, and she did not bring him the comfortable dowry he was in need of.

Damaris Masham was certainly personable, but she was excessively short-sighted, nervous and excitable—perhaps the first blue-stocking of them all.

For nearly ten years before 1690, since well before her marriage in fact, Lady Masham had been in constant correspondence with a bachelor now past his middle age, a gentleman of some independent means in Somerset, a man of the great world, an astonishingly good talker, careful, pernickety and immoderately able. She had met him in London where he was established as the confidential adviser of the Earl of Shaftesbury, then at the crisis of his career as the leader of the opposition to King Charles II. But Shaftesbury's personal physician and confidant was also a don, a Student of Christ Church, Oxford, and already eminent for profoundly novel philosophical views of his own, views which he had discussed with her and with his other friends, and had written out in manuscript, but had not yet published. His name was John Locke, but this was probably not the name with which he signed his many letters to her. Her replies, some of which have recently been recovered, were signed "Philoclea," and they are, some of them, quite evidently replies to an affectionate correspondent. Indeed, not only letters but poetry, academic and theological, but nevertheless uncommonly like love poetry, had also passed between them.

In 1683 Locke had had to go to Holland for pressing political reasons, and in 1684 he had been expelled from Christ Church. Early in 1689, however, he had made a triumphant return to England in the very ship which had brought over Her Majesty Queen Mary to rule as co-sovereign with King William. In 1690 he had published three very important books. The first was one of the greatest of all books of philosophy in the English language, *The Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*. The other two had appeared anonymously, a letter on *Toleration* and two treatises on *Government* which became famous as statements of the liberal attitude to politics. Nevertheless his position, and his home, at Christ Church were not given back to him and in 1690 he was living rather miserably in lodgings in London, suffering from the smoke of that already grimy city, for Locke was asthmatic. Early in



1691 Sir Francis and Lady Masham invited him to come and make his home for the rest of his life with them.

John Locke lived at Otes as a paying guest at £1 a week for himself and his manservant, and 1s. a week for his horse. For this he was given two of the best rooms in the house, on the first floor to the right of the gabled porch in the picture. We know that the encircling moat was still a striking feature of the house, because Locke was once referred to as "the gentleman now within the moated castle." We know, too, that his presence, though it added a European notoriety to the place, and was a modest source of income, was also a little inconvenient, since it left so little room for other guests. For the paraphernalia which attached itself to a great seventeenth-century philosopher, scientist, doctor, economist, political theorist and civil servant was formidable indeed. Besides his desk and his specially constructed chair, there were the meteorological instruments set up "in the Drawing Room at Oates" recording some of the earliest room temperatures in our history, there was his telescope, his botanical specimens, and a great porous stone through which all the water he drank—and he drank nothing else—had to be carefully filtered. But above all there were the books, a good roomful to begin with and being added to by the hundred; big books, great sets of leather folios weighing a stone and more a set. When he died there were nearly 4,000 volumes: Sir Francis Masham's ten servants must have been kept hard at it.

On June 24th. 1692, Locke presented to Lady Damaris Masham "A parasol, a split bongrace (which was 'a shade worn in front of women's bonnets to protect the complexion') and 6 pair of gloves." Although he was sixty and she was thirty-four it seems that the time for gallantry was not yet over, and two months later he bought black patches for her face and a "cornet," the fashionable millinery of the day. Entries for things like this, and other things more serious and valuable, appear as "Delivered to my Lady Masham" in Locke's meticulous accounts until the end, and the last entry he made—probably the last thing he ever wrote—recorded a payment of £4 to the lady in London who bought these things on his behalf. We do not know quite what was the

relationship between the three important members of the household at Otes during these years, and too much should not perhaps be made of the exchange of gifts which was the courteous form of that age. There is evidence that Sir Francis had mortgaged some of his property to Locke, and it is clear that Locke regarded Sir Francis with some impatience when it came to the many and complicated business matters for which he and some of his astute London friends acted as Lady Masham's agent. We know that when he died he made her son the heir to a great deal of his money and half of his books, and so the five-year-old boy nicknamed "Totty" whom he found in the house in 1690 became, as Francis Cudworth Masham, the owner of a superb library and the guardian of the literary remains of his mother and his grandfather, Ralph Cudworth. In this generation, then, the word "Otes" meant one of the really important addresses in the world of European letters.

It was the ageing Locke, therefore, who sunned himself in that vanished garden sloping down to what is now a dismal marsh. It was he who watched these two fine lime trees in their early years, or even he who planted them, since he sent seeds out of Holland for a lime avenue to another friend. Beneath their slowly growing shade he played with Totty and with others of the Masham children and their friends: there was Esther Masham, who grew from a girl to a young woman whilst Locke was there and who has preserved for us his elaborately playful letters to her, and several Masham sons passing from youth to manhood. In this garden, too, Locke strolled with his own visitors; Peter King, his cousin's son, a lawyer at the beginning of a career which was to make him Lord Chancellor and founder of an English noble family, or the new Earl of Shaftesbury, already himself a philosopher, or Lord Peterborough who was to be Marlborough's general in Spain, or the great Sir Isaac Newton himself. After he died, the Frenchman who had been his secretary wrote this of Otes: "I cannot but take pleasure in imagining to myself, that this place, so well known to so many persons of merit, whom I have seen come thither from so many parts of England to visit Mr. Locke, will be famous to posterity for the long abode that great man

made here." Locke's lime trees are now all that we, his posterity, have to mark this place, but they are a fitter monument perhaps than the severe tablet in the gloomy little Church of High Laver whence they took him from Otes on a day in November 1704.

In 1708 Damaris Masham died, and as the years went by the many sons of Sir Francis died too, until it may have seemed that no Masham might be left to live at Otes after him. But there was still the young Samuel Masham at the Royal Court, and after 1702 he was Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Prince George of Denmark, consort to the sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Anne. In 1707 Samuel Masham had married, but married, it must have seemed, a little beneath him. Her name was Abigail Hill and she was a plain, silent, embarrassed and penniless woman, who had, like him, come to the Royal Court to earn her living, but in no very honourable post, for she had started as a sort of superior chambermaid or even a washerwoman, as her sister Alice was after her. She owed even this employment to a distant relationship with the ruling lady of the day, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, Anne's closest friend and, it seemed to many people, the effective ruler of the country. When she married, Abigail Hill was one of the Queen's "dressers," who were personal maids who slept on the floor of the Royal bedroom, ready at hand day and night to help the Queen to her clothes and anything else she wanted, to open the doors and empty the slops. Nevertheless her marriage had taken place in the rooms of Doctor Arbuthnot, one of the Court physicians: further, the Queen herself had come in person and it was said had even provided "a round sum" for her dowry. The explanation of this extraordinary development, which is unique in the history of the English court and in English politics, was that the wretched, shuffling Abigail Masham had by 1707 begun to oust her exalted kinswoman, the Duchess, as the Queen's personal associate. Mrs. Samuel Masham, in fact, was to become one of the most considerable political personages in the country, strong enough to take from the Duchess of Marlborough the office of keeper of the Queen's purse, to help in the fall of the Whigs from power and the retirement of the Duke of Marlborough. There is a legend that the Treaty of

Utrecht was once in peril because a cup of coffee was spilt upon her gown.

The vanished Library at Otes must once have contained the evidence on how all this came about. From the side of Abigail's correspondents and critics the story of what happened after 1707 is well enough known and too lengthy for us here. What we do not yet know, however, is exactly how it all began and above all exactly how she managed to bring it off, what she herself thought of it, or indeed what she thought at all on any subject other than the political matters discussed in the score or so of her letters which survive. It was not all a matter of the bullied and dependent Queen turning from the outrageous Duchess to her personal servant for solace and companionship, and finally even for advice and political guidance. For Mrs. Masham was probably a Tory and a High Church-woman to start with, as against the Whiggism and Low Church persuasion of the Marlboroughs. Very early in the story that astute Tory leader, Robert Harley, later Earl of Oxford, had discovered that he also was related to the Queen's Abigail<sup>1</sup> in just the same distant way as the Duchess, and he used her as a means of backstairs influence on the Queen.

The letters and the memoirs of the Marlboroughs, of Harley and Godolphin, and of Samuel Masham's friends Dean Swift, Arbuthnot and Pope—indeed of most of the leading political and literary figures of the Augustan Age—tell us everything except what was going on behind the broad features and red nose of Abigail Masham herself. We have Sarah Marlborough's superb fulminations over that "nobody but a chambermaid, whom I took from a broom," and her account of a series of extraordinary scenes with the Queen Anne, with Abigail Masham creeping furtively in the background. We know that the great Commander-in-Chief made a bedchamber crisis over her presence near the Queen and that his officers drank "damnation to Mrs. Masham" because the Queen insisted that her brother, Colonel Hill, should be made a General, and her husband, Samuel Masham, a Colonel. We know that she was

<sup>1</sup> Although the Oxford Dictionary gives the use of the word "Abigail" for a lady's maid as dating from 1666, it is worth suggesting that the career of Abigail Hill (Masham) may have helped to popularize the term. She was certainly the Abigail *par excellence*.

a personage so important to the peace party, which was finally victorious in 1711, that Swift wrote of her when she was about to have a baby in that year "Pray God preserve her life, which is of great importance."

This baby died, but it seems that when her only son to survive was born the following year the Queen was present at the christening. This second Samuel Masham was the heir to a barony, for on January 1st, 1712, his father had been created Lord Masham of Otes in Essex and his patent still survives. The Queen did this reluctantly and as part of a move to make a majority for peace in the House of Lords so as to bring Marlborough's wars to an end. She had become so fond of Abigail Masham and so dependent on her being perpetually near her that, as a contemporary says, "The Queen told me, she never had any design to make a great lady of her, and should lose a useful servant about her person : for it would give great offence to have a peeress lie upon the floor, and do several other inferior offices ; but at last consented, upon the condition she remained as dresser." The family of Masham had risen to nobility, but in the oddest manner in the history of the English noble order.

All this took place at a great distance from the quiet moated house in Essex, where it seems that the widowed Sir Francis, the Whig, lived on with his daughter Esther until 1722, not rich enough to provide the poor girl with the dowry she must have to get a husband. After Queen Anne's death in 1714, the political consequence of his Tory son and his daughter-in-law melted entirely in the long, long Whig summertime which set in with the Hanoverians. They retired gracefully, and despite the many insinuations of peculation which have been made against Abigail Masham, it must have been somewhat penuriously, to a small house at Langley in Buckinghamshire. Lord and Lady Masham cannot have lived for many years at Otes, but after he had succeeded his father in the baronetcy, Lord Masham did move there from Langley. For nine or ten years after about 1725 it was the figures of Samuel and Abigail Masham which were to be seen behind those mullioned windows and beneath the lime trees in the garden, together with their relatives, the Hills. In December, 1734, Lady Masham

died, and in her turn was carried over the fields and along the winding pathway to the churchyard of High Laver.

Lady Abigail Masham's tomb stands in the churchyard under the east wall of the church. It is not many feet away from Locke's, which is round the corner up against the south wall, though its faded tablet has been moved inside the building to protect the lettering of that famous epitaph from weathering still further. Beside her lie Alice Hill, her sister and companion in the menial service of the Crown, John Hill, her useless soldier brother, and her husband, who died in 1758. High Laver churchyard is the final gathering ground of the Court of Queen Anne. It is a delicious paradox that John Locke, the great philosopher of Whiggism, the destroyer of the divinity of the English kings, should find himself thus surrounded by this company of court favourites and Tory hangers-on. In their deaths at least the victory must go to that Royalist knight, Sir Robert Filmer, whose Divine Right of Kingship Locke had annihilated, for Sir Robert is splendidly entombed in the Filmer family church in the midst of generation upon generation of Tory Filmer baronets buried around him right down to our century.

Abigail Masham's story has an importance greater than that of palace intrigue. The issue of the right relation between monarchy and the "party" in power, which was fought out through and around her, was a constitutional problem that had to be solved before Locke's ideal, our ideal, of government by consent of the governed could become part of a settled system. The actual constitutional crises in which she figured provided considerable precedents for our later practice. It was because of her that we had the first "Bedchamber Crisis," and because of her husband, among other things, that the expedient of creating peers to solve a constitutional deadlock was invented. Abigail Masham deserves more serious attention than historians have given to her hitherto.

The 1st Lord Masham does not seem to have been much at Otes in the twenty-three years left to him after the death of his wife. She was mourned by Swift as his best friend, and from Swift's correspondence we learn, too, that her son, now in his twenty's, was "ill-natured and proud, and very little in him,"

and that Swift "hated him from a boy" and "much disliked his education." It was on this young man, however, that Lord Masham based all his hopes, and when he was married in 1736, he strained himself to the utmost to settle on him enough money to maintain a respectable establishment for a nobleman's heir. Langley had to be sold and the father left so little for himself that he had to lodge with his son in London and could no longer afford his coach. For this reason we must perhaps suppose that during these years the bustling house at Otes was deserted, or let out to strangers. The bulging library was still there, of course, and it had already attracted the attention of scholars. F. C. Masham had died unmarried in 1731 and his money (and so Locke's money) had come to the main family line, which had inherited from General Hill as well. Young Samuel Masham's match was also promising enough financially, for Miss Winnington was talked of as "worth £20,000," and in fact brought him as much as £10,000. By this time the politics of Queen Anne's reign were far enough away for him to take up the family's traditional association with the Court, and he became Lord of the Bedchamber to George II and George III successively, and was granted a Royal pension of £1,000 a year in 1761. The Mashams were consolidating their social consequence, but the new representative was no fortune builder: his tastes were for the world of *haut ton*, and the Tudor manor house of Otes can have been of little consequence to him.

With so much settled on him already, he had little to expect from his father's death, but he had nevertheless begun to borrow money, his wife's fortune having already been dissipated. When he succeeded to the title in 1758 he owed £3,000 on a complicated mortgage dated 1757 owned ostensibly by a Dr. Taylor, but probably in fact by a man whose name appears as a witness only to the deed. This was his manager "Robert Palmer of the Parish of St. Andrew, Holborn," a shrewd character, knowledgeable enough in money and in land to become in 1765 agent for the colossal estate of the Russells, Dukes of Bedford.

By this time he had Lord Masham completely within his grasp. In 1761 Lord Masham's wife died, and a year later he

married again, this time a lady who had been with him in the Royal service, a Miss Charlotte Dive. She brought him £8,000 and an extravagant disposition: the second Lady Masham was a high flier. In her company Lord Masham ruined himself and his family swiftly, certainly and for ever. In five years they ran through her dowry and £8,600 more besides; the big creditor was the ingenious Mr. Palmer. This burden of debt, small as aristocratic finances went in that age, was far too great for the modest resources of the barony of Masham. In a deed dated 1766 all the Masham lands, Otes manor and farm, Matching, Little Laver Hall and the rest, became the absolute property of Robert Palmer. All he allowed to Masham was £450 a year for his life and the right to live at Otes, in 1767 the court baron of Otes acknowledged Robert Palmer as lord of the manor, and no longer recognized the overlordship of the ruined peer at the manor house.

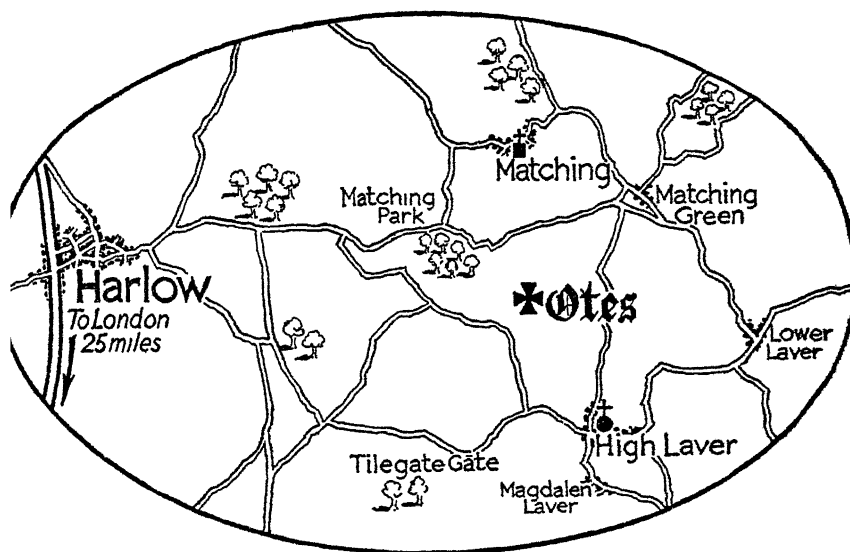
The money had gone on high living of the conventional sort. The second Lord Masham has left behind him the reputation of hard drinking, and also bills for ice cream, for a consignment of tea, and for plants and seeds, both flowers and vegetables. From this it is perhaps to be inferred that the new Lady Masham saw to it that the manor house of Otes was refurbished and its gardens laid out and stocked anew—many of the features which are to be seen in the picture of the place which illustrates this article may date from after 1762. But the alterations were not only internal, and the last of the Mashams sold up more than his family lands. One of the literary scandals of the later eighteenth century was the manner in which this fashionable couple treated the family library. "About the year 1762," said a writer in the *Critical Review* in 1785, "when the late Lord Masham married his second lady, his lordship thought proper to remove the useless volumes of ancient learning, part of the library, which had been bequeathed to the family by Mr. Locke, and the manuscripts of Dr. Cudworth, to make room for books of polite manuscript." We do not know exactly how much of the manuscript evidence about his predecessors in the manor house of Otes this irresponsible wastrel got rid of in this way. We do know that the bookseller who bought from him behaved with "no more regard for these



learned volumes than the right honourable Goth who had expelled them from his library," and that when he found he could not sell some of the papers "threw them into his garret where they were exposed to the rats and the depredations of his maid."

When Lady Masham was dying, her husband took down her last words on a scrap of paper which is still to be seen. "'Do you think that I shall recover?' . . . 'Your being so weak and being obliged to lie in bed so much, I am afraid you cannot bear.' . . . 'Make Bell a present.' . . . I asked her and said I hope she did not take anything ill of me. She held up her hand and said 'Oh no, no' and shook me by the hand. May 20th, 1773." The decay of a family is always melancholy to watch, and it may be more difficult for us to forgive the man who brought it about than it was for his dying wife. The last Lord Masham spent three desolate years after that mournful day, looking out alone over the trees and the gardens, the lake and the fields which were no longer his own, so burdened with debt that he was unable to attend the House of Lords. We know most about him in the years 1775-76, the last months of his life, for he was one of the figures in the trial before the Upper House of "The Duchess of Kingston" for bigamy. This notorious lady had, as Miss Chudleigh, contracted a marriage in her early years from which she had been given what then corresponded to a separation order. She had later become the mistress and finally "married" the last Duke of Kingston, one of Masham's boon companions, after whose death her famous trial took place at the instigation of his surviving relatives. We have a group of letters between her and Lord Masham, in which she appeals to their earlier association in the service of the Royal Court and asks for his help. From these last letters to and from a Masham at Otes it appears that the ageing and infirm widower did his best to assist her, but she lost her case, though not the property, and left for the Court of Catherine of Russia. Lord Masham died on June 14th, 1776, when all his honours became extinct, and so did the family of Masham.

There is some evidence that Otes was left empty, but still furnished and the books and papers still in place, for some time afterwards. A learned Bishop, Edmund Law of Carlisle, who



"History Today" Map by S. H. Perrin

#### Otes and its surroundings

had once visited the library, wrote to "the gentlemen to whom the library at Otes belonged" to ask for anything which might help in his edition of Locke's *Works* which appeared in 1777. It was Mr. Palmer who replied and it was Mr. Palmer who finally removed the contents, or more probably some of the contents of the house to his own seat at Holme Park, Sonning, Berkshire. There they remained until about eighty years ago, Locke's porous stone, his chair, and many of his books amongst them. The Miss Palmer who owned them then, however, was conscious that much had disappeared and after her death the Palmer family began its own decline, and by 1916 all had gone, and their Masham possessions are now completely scattered. The only papers from Otes which can still be traced are the few family documents which have been quoted here, and Esther Masham's letter book, which has got as far afield as Chicago. So completely has the thread been broken that we cannot tell whether the broad-featured lady in the National Portrait Gallery whose picture has "Lady Abigail Masham" on its label is in fact the lady whose portrait must have hung at

Otes. In fact, we no longer know what this extraordinary woman looked like.

Tenants were found for the house by the Palmers, and so the illegitimate son of Edward Wortley Montagu by his Turkish mistress came to live among Locke's books, and to leave his Arabic Koran in the collection. By the year 1801 Otes was empty again, and this time it was put up for sale at auction by a "Mr. Robins, at Garroways Coffee House, Change Alley, Cornhill, on Thursday 1st October, 1801." His catalogue of the estate reads much as they do today: "The Manor of Oates, with the Mansion House, Offices of every description, Plantation, Garden, Fish Ponds, Lawns, Paddocks, Lands and Woods. Containing 116 acres . . . rental £1,239 . . . Oates Mansion House. Part erected within these few years." It seems from the full description that the newer wing of the building, the large square portion on the right in our illustration, had been added since the extinction of the Mashams, and that their Tudor rooms had become offices and servants' quarters. But in 1801 no adequate bid for the property appears to have been made, and the same lots were put up again in the same place a year later, on July 19th, 1802. Even then it does not appear that the house itself found a bidder, and though the lands were taken up, Otes never seems to have been lived in again. By 1830 it had been pulled down, and by 1890 it had disappeared almost as completely as it is today. It was in 1952 that the one remaining outhouse fell to the ground.

NOTE. I should like to thank Mrs. Clement Williams of Shelvingstone, Sonning, to whom what is left of the contents of Otes now belongs, for the help she has given with this essay. In a long letter published in *The Times Literary Supplement* in August, 1952, the contents of the library at Otes were described, and its subsequent history sketched. I should like to repeat the appeal made there for information about items from it known to readers of this essay.

# GOYA AND THE PENINSULAR WAR

by W. R. Jeudwine

IN 1808 GOYA WAS SIXTY-TWO. For the past nine years he had been official court painter to Charles IV, and his reputation was firmly established as the foremost artist in Spain. The self-portrait etched as a frontispiece to *Los Caprichos* shows what he looked like around 1800. It is a strong face, reminding one a little of Oliver Cromwell, and it suggests a big powerful man. There is a certain self-consciousness which makes it very much a portrait of "the master." The mouth has a touch of arrogance, and in the sideways glance of the eyes is a hint of the satirical shrewdness that produced the merciless portrait of Queen Maria Luisa now in the gallery at Munich. Here, one would have said, is a man brimming with self-confidence and swagger, a likely hero for the legendary escapades of his youth. He is supposed, for example, to have fled from his home-town of Saragossa after leading a brawl between rival church factions ; to have been involved in the political riots at Madrid in 1776, and to have been imprisoned in Rome for climbing at night into a convent in pursuit of a nun. These tales, legendary though they may be, are not altogether out of keeping with Goya's character. Success did not tame him, nor did the severe illness in 1793-4 which left him stone deaf. Indeed, this illness and the years of his closest association with the Duchess of Alba that immediately followed, seemed to create an emotional tension which evoked some of his finest work. Between 1790 and 1800, Goya's genius had matured and was as yet unwearied. So the portrait shows him, pugnacious, sensual, proud, and very conscious of his exalted standing.

Another self-portrait, painted in 1815, is rather different. The arrogance and the panache have gone. The impression of strength remains, but it is the strength of a man who has profoundly suffered. In the deep lines and the massive shadows round the eyes may be read the imprints of six years of war.

Goya's passionate temperament, and the liberal tendencies shared by so many of his generation, made him feel keenly the clash of loyalties provoked by the war. Concern for the integrity of Spain conflicted with a desire for reforms which could never be carried out under the corrupt and incompetent government of Charles IV. Napoleon appeared both as a liberator and an oppressor. In Goya, the artist and the patriot, the liberal and the courtier, were each pulling a different way. At one moment he is painting the French atrocities of the third of May, at another an allegory of Madrid in honour of Joseph Bonaparte.

Nor was it only political events that tended to change Goya's outlook. In 1802 the Duchess of Alba died, and her loss added another and deeper loneliness to the loneliness of the deaf. After this time, the mood of his painting darkens. We see no more of those festive decorations, like echoes of Fragonard and Watteau, in which the cooler, more silvery colours have been quenched by the hot sun of Spain. The more sombre plates of the *Caprichos* set the key for most of Goya's later work. Purely visual elegance has given way to an imaginative passion which surges unchecked through the *Disasters of the War*. This series of etchings, and many of the later paintings, owe their power less to felicities of design and colour than to the fire of personal emotion. The tragedy of Spain, as it unfolded in 1808 and the succeeding years, made an impression upon Goya both as a man and as an artist that was never to be effaced.

With the exception of the French Emperor, Goya had known personally for years past all the principal figures in this curious drama of weakness degenerating into cowardice, of disloyalty shading into treason. Throughout the war, with a few short breaks, he remained in Madrid and saw the departure of Charles IV to Bayonne, the comings and goings of Murat and Joseph, the triumphal entry of Wellington, and the return of Ferdinand VII as king. Like many Spaniards, he was inclined at first to look hopefully upon the influence of revolutionary France. Even in 1808, he might have been prepared, if given a chance, to trust the benevolence of Napoleon. But hope turned to suspicion and suspicion to hatred. The nation's life and honour were challenged, and Goya has borne witness in

his etchings to the cost of that awakening. He saw it from the inside. In order to understand his war pictures, it is necessary to follow the course of those events which provoked such violent changes of heart in the Spanish people.

Chief among those who supported the French alliance was Manuel Godoy, Prince of the Peace and first minister, who had been a virtual dictator since 1795. He was a man of relatively humble birth and small talent, who owed his place to the favour of Queen Maria Luisa. He had caught her eye as a young guardsman, well built and coarsely handsome, with an imperturbable calm of manner and a certain lazy charm. Maria Luisa was infatuated with him, and he was adroit enough to exploit her infatuation on a lavish scale. Their liaison was common gossip to all except the king, who appears to have remained in ignorance to the last. Charles, however, took no interest in politics, and found it convenient to surrender all authority in such matters to his minister. Godoy, in turn, was ruled by his mistress, by personal ambition, and by popular opinion. Soon after he first came to power, the country was shocked by the execution of Louis XVI and the cry went up for war against France. Godoy acquiesced, and the French border province of Roussillon was occupied by Spanish troops. Spanish enthusiasm, however, was soon dissipated by a few minor French victories and by the effects of propaganda. In the face of growing discontent, Godoy made peace in 1795. This ignominious withdrawal from a futile campaign raised him to the height of his power and popularity. His already immense fortune was augmented by the gift of an estate, together with the most exceptional decorations.

In spite of several changes of fancy by Maria Luisa, Godoy's power continued absolute for the next twelve years. By the end of that time he was a much hated man. The people were tired of his ostentation and sickened by the continuing scandal of his relations with the Queen. Moreover, his feeble despotism, based on nepotism and corruption, had done nothing to remedy the deplorable condition of the country. He had, however, after much prevarication, decided that it would be well to make a bargain with Napoleon. So, in 1807, he signed the treaty of Fontainebleau. This disgraceful agreement allowed

French troops to pass through Spain to the conquest of Portugal, which was to be divided between Godoy himself and the Infanta Maria Luisa.

Some rumour of what was being done seems to have reached the Prince of the Asturias, the King's eldest son, who was afterwards Ferdinand VII. Excluded from public life, frustrated and embittered, Ferdinand had loathed Godoy from childhood, and more than once had plotted against him. Now he was to try again, though his plot, like the previous ones, was based on personal rather than patriotic grounds. With the help of a few supporters, he had planned to reveal to the king all the scandals about Godoy of which Charles had for so long been ignorant. Godoy, however, was before him: his rooms were searched and incriminating documents found. Ferdinand was accused of *lèse-majesté* and publicly tried at the Escorial. Under examination, he collapsed utterly and betrayed his friends, some of whom were imprisoned with their families. Ferdinand was pardoned, but Godoy, feeling sure of French protection, had the proceedings of the trial published in the Madrid Gazette. This was a false move. For Ferdinand, that stupid and degenerate prince, was at this time Ferdinand the Desired. The people saw in him the only means of getting rid of the detested Godoy, and as leader of a party pledged to reform he would have commanded overwhelming support. As things were, Ferdinand and Godoy between them were responsible for handing over Spain to Napoleon without an attempt at resistance until it was too late. Had either of them possessed even a moderate degree of courage or ability, Napoleon might perhaps have been made to pause before attempting a forced crossing of the Pyrenees.

In December, 1807, the French armies under Junot and Davoust were at Bayonne. In January they had reached Valladolid and Salamanca on the road to Madrid, and their advance continued slowly throughout the early spring. Everywhere they were greeted as liberators. In February, Murat was sent from Paris as commander of all French troops in Spain. "In my passage," he wrote, "I have found all the inhabitants lining the hedgerows in all the provinces I have come through. The joy that burst from them was nothing short of delirious.

Never was a people more unhappy because of their bad government, and never was anything more worthy of its fate." In March, the palace of Godoy at Aranjuez was sacked by a mob and the Prince of the Peace was obliged to remain in hiding for thirty-six hours in an attic. Thirst eventually drove him out ; he was caught and promptly imprisoned by Ferdinand. The price of his liberty (and it must be supposed that Maria Luisa would have thought no price too high) was that Charles IV should abdicate in favour of his son. On March 18th, Ferdinand was proclaimed king and a week later made his formal entry into Madrid. Already, however, real power was in other hands. Murat, who had made his own triumphal entry only the day before, refused to recognize Ferdinand, and there followed the farcical procession of all the members of the Spanish royal family to Bayonne, where one by one they were dispossessed of all claims to sovereignty and pensioned off by Napoleon.

These events were watched by Goya from his house overlooking the Puerta del Sol with the same mixed feelings that swayed the populace. They wanted to get rid of Godoy, but they had no desire to lose their king. Ferdinand was primarily acceptable as Godoy's enemy, but Charles IV without his first minister would have done equally well. Unfortunately, Maria Luisa would not give Godoy up, and Charles could not, for the capacities of that gluttonous but not unamiable monarch stopped far short of the art of government. In any case, it was becoming plain that Napoleon had no intention of allowing any member of the Spanish royal family, for whom he had an understandable contempt, to occupy the throne. Spain was to become another imperial province, as the Spaniards began slowly and belatedly to understand. As early as March there had been signs of unrest, but real trouble did not start until May 2nd when riots broke out almost simultaneously in Madrid, Cadiz, Seville, Badajoz, and Valencia.

The rioting was provoked by instructions from Charles IV that the members of his family remaining in Madrid should be sent to join him at Bayonne. There were only three of them, his brother Don Antonio, his daughter the Infanta Maria Luisa, and the little Infante Francisco, whom court gossip



claimed to be the son of Godoy. As the carriages drew up before the palace, a crowd gathered, knowing nothing of the schemes of Napoleon, but uneasily aware that something strange and perhaps dishonourable was afoot. Then a rumour started that the young prince was in tears, because he did not want to leave his home, and the cry went up that he was being kidnapped. The crowd surged round the carriage and cut the traces. An officer of Murat's staff appeared on the steps and a few grenadiers attempted to disperse the crowd ; but the sight of the French uniform, which only a few weeks before they had greeted with cheers, now served to stir their anger into violence.

The first shots were heard by Murat in his library and set him in an agony of indecision. He seems to have felt that the explosiveness of the situation called for tact and moderation rather than a display of force, but he knew Napoleon's opinion of the Spanish mob and was terrified of making a mistake or being found lacking in energy. A battalion of infantry was dispatched and, with a few shots, the insurgents were sent flying panic-stricken down the side-streets, wreaking their fury on any French soldier they saw. The Spanish troops, who had been confined to barracks, now decided to join in the fray in disobedience to their orders, and what had started as a minor brawl developed during the day into a battle. Murat called upon his cavalry, and by degrees the crowd was driven back into the open space of the Puerta del Sol where a platoon of Mamelukes, concealed till the last moment, charged them with drawn sabres. By late evening, all was quiet again, with three hundred Spaniards dead upon the streets.

Murat did not wish to inflict any further punishment on the rioters, and indeed it would have been impossible to sort out the ringleaders in such a chaotic affair. But the agreement made for the pardoning of prisoners either did not reach the local commanders in time, or was considered by them to be inapplicable. Throughout the night until the early hours of the morning, prisoners were taken out in batches and shot in the outskirts of the city. The number was not great, perhaps forty or fifty, but from the French point of view these executions were the crowning disaster of a most disastrous day.

Goya's two pictures of the charge of the Mamelukes and the execution of the prisoners, both painted several years later, are not only masterpieces of realist painting in a new style, but the personal testimony of a great artist to the surge of patriotic feeling which within a few weeks swept over Spain. The first of them is the least successful, although Goya was certainly a witness of the event. He never acquired much facility in elaborate "all-over" figure compositions, and this picture appears a little awkward in spite of the vividness of its detail. There is, however, some compensation for the lack of those smooth and daring felicities of baroque design, such as Rubens would have given us in treating the same subject. Our attention is the more closely directed to the work as a splendid piece of reporting. The turbaned Moor, riding with his dagger poised has the air of being taken straight from life. Very real, too, is the panic, ferocity, and fear in the blurred faces of the crowd in the background, and in the dark figure in front who is about to stab the already lifeless body of the Moor whom he has dragged from his horse. As a whole, however, the picture does not form a complete unity.

The "Third of May" is simpler and more dramatic, almost, a study in black and white like the etchings. Legend tells us that Goya was present at this scene also and that, in his emotion, he ran to a muddy puddle nearby and dipping his finger in it sketched the broad outline of his composition on a white-washed wall. Although, like most of the stories about Goya, this is almost certainly untrue, the effect created is one of powerful and immediate intensity. The sharply contrasted and carefully balanced groups, the soldiers on one side, the prisoners on the other, are linked by the menacing thrust forward of the aimed rifles. These terrified and helpless men were martyrs, but Goya has not invested them with any of the glamour of martyrdom. A batch of prisoners being shot—the picture, tells us the bare, brutal story, without glorifying the victims or blackening the executioners. Goya has no eye for pageantry and false heroics; his theme is cruelty and suffering, blindly inflicted, and hopelessly endured.

"Spaniards, your nation was perishing after a long agony. I have seen your ills, I am about to bring you the remedy for

them. . . . Your monarchy is old, my mission is to rejuvenate it. I shall place your glorious crown upon the head of one who is another myself." Today, these words from Napoleon's proclamation on the 31st May, 1808, sound a familiar note, the amplified bray of a dictator's propaganda. But it was true that the Spaniards had for long been grumbling at the old régime. They would have gladly accepted a revolution, even a terror, had it come from within. The events of the 3rd May turned all their resentment against the foreigner. Within a few days, armed bands were being formed throughout the country. Ill-disciplined, ill-equipped, and for the most part ill-led, they fought with extraordinary tenacity for the next six years. They were a factor which Napoleon had not reckoned with, and he never appreciated the difficulty of trying to subdue a country so implacably hostile. The guerillas, in spite of a few collaborationists in high places, had the mass of the people behind them. It was they who made it possible for Wellington's troops to defeat piecemeal an army four times their number. In the whole war they gained only one considerable victory, at a time when its value as a morale builder far exceeded its tactical importance. This was in July, 1808, when nearly twenty thousand Frenchmen under Dupont surrendered at Baylen. Afterwards, the Spaniards, unlike the Portuguese, could seldom be depended on in a pitched battle and they were a considerable vexation to Wellington. It was not until 1812, when they had exhausted the possibilities of defeat under their own generals, that Wellington was made commander-in-chief. They did, however, by their mere presence hold down great numbers of Frenchmen, obliging them to waste their strength in guards, escorts, and garrisons. Soldiers and civilians alike would set upon small parties of the enemy wherever the chance offered, provoking horrible reprisals which only made matters worse. King Joseph understood the situation more clearly than the Emperor. "I must desire to leave Madrid and Spain," he wrote in 1811, "before the prolonged spectacle of the common misery and its inevitable consequences drive me away with violence."

It is this people's war that Goya depicts in his etchings and a few paintings. Portraits at this period are comparatively rare, official commissions even rarer. He painted an allegory

of Madrid in honour of Joseph and received from him the Order of Spain which he never wore. This and a few portraits of French officers seem to have been his only concessions to foreign authority. He continued to live with his family in Madrid, and made several visits of some length to different parts of the country.

Early in 1809 he was at Saragossa, which was then recovering from the first siege. He did a large equestrian portrait of the garrison commander, General Palafox, and a portrait of the heroine of the siege, Maria Agustina. This picture was destroyed by the French during the second siege, but the story is preserved in an etching. Maria Agustina was a young girl engaged to be married to a soldier then serving with a gun detachment at Saragossa. His section came under heavy attack ; many were killed and the rest showed signs of abandoning the position. The etching shows Maria Agustina standing alone upon the dead bodies, her lover's among them, with a taper in her hand, about to touch off the canon. The caption is *Que Valor—* "What Courage."

Goya spent some time in Saragossa and later travelled south, passing through Baylen, Seville, and Cadiz, where he may have seen something of the unsuccessful Spanish campaign in the summer and autumn of 1810. Several of the etchings are dated this year. Any belief he may have had in the beneficence of French rule must by now have been dissipated. Goya had many friends among those liberal idealists who believed that France was the country of enlightenment ; but although he shared some of their opinions, he was never of their party. He had too vivid a memory of the third of May and the ruins of Saragossa.

A bad harvest and the cumulative effect of great armies living for long periods off the country made 1811 a year of famine. Goya spent it in Madrid, where the appalling misery provided material for some of his grimmest etchings. Nothing like it had been seen in Europe since the Thirty Years War. Goya and his family survived, although his wife died soon afterwards, and in 1812 he was on the road again. In August, he had his first meeting with Wellington, an unfamiliar figure with a strained, sleepless look as Goya drew him at Alba de

Tormes after the battle of Salamanca. He followed the liberator to Madrid and there painted the rather uninspired equestrian portrait now in Apsley House. It was a brief liberation, for Wellington, repenting of an advance made for the sake of prestige rather than strategical advantage, was soon on his way back to Portugal. Joseph remained at the head of affairs, writing gloomy despatches to the Emperor and begging to be relieved of his post. After the defeat of Vittoria, he was at last replaced by Soult who continued the fight to the bitter end on the French side of the Pyrenees.

The return of Ferdinand the Desired in 1814 brought a lot of work for Goya. All the grandees wanted to be painted in the first flush of the restoration. But he could feel no enthusiasm for the new order, and before long the people who had acclaimed the king so joyfully began to discover what kind of man he really was. Goya's portrait shows a rather plump, almost absurdly ungraceful figure, whose head is too large and whose legs are too small. He looks suspiciously out of the picture, as though daring anyone to upset his authoritative pose. Ferdinand had no ambition, except to assure his own rights as an absolute monarch. He was bigoted and revengeful, and immediately instituted a witch hunt against everything and everybody with the least taint of liberalism. Goya himself was brought before a tribunal to explain his acceptance of a decoration from Joseph. He did so satisfactorily, but he was not received into favour. Disgusted with so much injustice and folly, he was now busy etching the plates of his *Disasters of War*.

Even in a generation which has seen the art of tyranny perfected, this series of eighty-five etchings still retains the power to shock. They are not simply an impersonal record, like Callot's engravings of the Thirty Years War. Goya uses the strongest contrasts of black and white to heighten the dramatic impact so that his figures and his details detach themselves in stark silhouette: white naked bodies against the blackness of an improvised grave: rifle barrels, sabres, and bayonets standing out against the sky; the blots and smears of blood on white shirts, and the dark, ragged stumps of amputated limbs. This is the realism not of a reporter but of a visionary.

The plates are not arranged haphazard, but follow one

another more or less consecutively, so that a complete picture is unfolded of what the war meant to Spain. This is Goya's purpose. He does not beat the patriotic drum. It is often difficult to decide which of his figures are French and which Spanish. Whether murdering or being murdered, they are all helplessly isolated in a mad world. To make his points quite clear he has given a caption to each plate. Sometimes they are written with anger, sometimes with compassion, very often with irony. Once or twice he puts simply "I saw this."

The series opens with a kind of invocation. Against a dark, formless background a man in a tattered shirt kneels with arms outstretched and eyes uplifted, an expression of agonized entreaty on his face. *Gloomy presentiments of things to come*, Goya calls it. There follow forty-seven plates, most of which probably originated in 1810. The subjects are nearly all violent and several plates are often devoted to the same theme. A soldier is trying to rape a girl while her mother comes up behind him with a knife (*They do not want to*): on the next page a tangle of women and soldiers are struggling on the ground (*And nor do these*). Further on, a civilian, perhaps a hostage from some village, is tied blindfold to a post; at his feet lies the body of his predecessor; the barrels of rifles project into the picture, and in the distance more prisoners are being shot (*There is no remedy*). Sometimes their death was not so merciful. Three naked bodies are tied to a tree, one quite dismembered, another horribly mutilated (*Wonderful heroism against dead men*). Repeatedly, we are shown the results of a minor massacre: a man vomiting blood over a heap of corpses (*Is this what you were born for?*): two peasants gazing with stricken faces at a similar heap from which the clothes have already been stripped (*Pity them and be silent*): or again, these same corpses being thrown into a pit (*Charity*). The light that in scenes like these falls unsparingly on so much tortured flesh suggests a world in which the normal decencies have been made impossible, leaving only suffering and the lust to kill.

The seventeen plates dealing with the famine of 1811 are less violent, but no less harrowing. Here, the theme is the starvation of the poor while the rich are left untouched. A group of cadaverous creatures huddles on the stones outside a house, and

in the background a stately figure in a huge cocked hat passes by with a glance (*They cry in vain*). In the centre of a similar group stands a gaunt man, his outstretched hand falling to his side in a gesture of despair, while a couple of grandees continue chatting together nearby (*Do they belong to another race?*). There is the irony of the *The Sound and the Sick*, which shows a mother and her baby, a skeleton youth, and an old man living in an archway, while a nun supports a crying child, all of them in varying stages of dissolution. Perhaps most terrible of all is the plate entitled *The death beds*. It is night, and a cowed figure walks with head bent past a line of recumbent shapes, only half seen across the darkened street.

The series ends with a number of allegorical plates, not all of them directly connected with the war, and the meaning of which is not always clear. Some of them express Goya's powerful anti-clericalism. *Truth lies dead*, for example, shows the symbolic figure of a woman being buried by a number of priests. More to the present point are several plates which illustrate Goya's view of the restoration. *They don't know the way*, dated 1819, is another interpretation of the blind leading the blind. A long line of people, priests and courtiers recognizable among them, wind their way among barren rocks, following one another on a rope. More decisive is *The Consequences* in which a formidable vampire is sucking what life remains from the prostrate body of a man. Finally, come the three plates of the *Prisoners*, which do not really belong to the series and were not produced until after 1820. These tragic figures shackled in their dungeon are an ironical last comment on the war of liberation.

The *Disasters of War* could not, of course, be published in Goya's lifetime, and they did not come out until 1863. Their appearance may perhaps have done something to enlarge the traditional English view of the Peninsular War as a strictly Anglo-French affair in which the Spaniards played an insignificant and, on the whole, unhelpful part. The proud paragraphs of Napier on the victories of Wellington made it easy to forget the guerillas and the smaller groups of the resistance, each of which was carrying on a war of its own. They were the real heroes, but their unyielding patriotism was wasted, as Goya

so well understood, by political intransigence, thereby setting the seal upon a tragedy from which the country never fully recovered.



# TRISTAN AND ISOLT

by Jon Manchip White

A MILE AND A HALF NORTH of Fowey in Cornwall there is a cross roads in a small valley; and in the middle of the cross roads stands an ancient column, over seven feet high. It is roughly square in section, and on one of the faces there is an inscription in two vertical lines. The script is Roman, with the exception of the first letter, which appears to be a half uncial. The inscription reads, "DRUSTANS HIC IACIT CUNOMORI FILIUS." "Here lies Drustans, son of Cunomorus." It is a strange sensation to put one's hand on the pitted surface of this grey pillar and to know, beyond reasonable doubt, that one is laying one's hand on the tombstone of Tristan, Count of Lyonesse.

The story of Tristan and Isolt is perhaps most familiar to us today in the operatic version by Richard Wagner. You will recall the moment in the first act when, as the great ship speeds over the sea to Cornwall, Isolde wrests the cup containing the love draught from Tristan. Wagner's somewhat exuberant stage direction at this point reads: "She drinks and then throws away the cup. Both, seized with shuddering, gaze with deepest emotion, but unmovable demeanour, into one another's eyes, in which the expression of defiance to death fades and melts into the glow of passion. Trembling seizes them, they convulsively clutch their hearts and pass their hands over their brows. Their glances again seek to meet, sink in confusion and once more turn with growing longing upon one another." Wagner derived his libretto from Simrock's version of the old German poem by Gottfried von Strassburg. There were many mediaeval renderings of the classic love tale. Gottfried von Strassburg's excellent poem was based in turn on a twelfth-century poem by a French writer called Thomas, whose contemporary Béroul wrote a version later used by Eilhart von Oberg. Chrétien de Troyes composed a Tristan poem, now lost, and two other French poets, Luce de Gast and Helie de

Borron, produced a romance known as the Prose Tristan in which the story became inextricably mingled with the Arthurian cycle. In various forms the favourite tale reached mediaeval Wales, Scotland and even Scandinavia. Its appeal has not diminished with the centuries. Tennyson, Arnold, Swinburne, Binyon and the American poet Edwin Arlington Robinson, among a host of others, have been attracted by it. It is one of the supreme, archetypal tragic love stories of the West.

What authority have we for believing that the stone outside the east drive of Menabilly House is a monument to Tristan? The reading of the first proper name on the stone, *Drustans*, has admittedly been disputed. Langdon, for example, the chronicler of the Cornish crosses, read it as *Circusius*. Most modern scholars, however, would accept the reading *Drustans*, *Drustagnus* or *Drustaus*, identical philologically with *Tristan*. This granted, what are we to make of the second name, *Cunomorus*, about which there is no dispute? It is at this point that our task of archaeological detection really begins. The name *Cunomorus* can be satisfactorily identified with King Mark, the King of Cornwall who despatched Sir Tristan to Ireland to bring back the lady Isolt, his intended bride and queen. In a life of Saint Paul Aurelian or Saint Pol de Léon, written by a monk called Wrmonoc of Landevennec in the ninth century, reference is made to a quarrel between the Saint and a King of Cornwall known as *Marcus dictus Quonomorius*. Saint Pol is known to have sailed from Cornwall to Brittany in the sixth century; he was probably patron of Saint Paul by Penzance. We may note here that the spacing of the words and the form of the lettering on the Menabilly stone have been ascribed with some confidence to the sixth century. If, then, the Fowey district can be shown to be the background of the Tristan story, the identification of the name *Cunomorus* with *Quonomorius* and thus with King Mark would appear to be positive.

There is a minor matter that we should mention before we turn our attention to the question of locality. Tristan is described on the column as *filius Cunomori*, son of Cunomorus. The relationship presents a difficulty, for in the early literature

Tristan is referred to never as the son, but as the nephew, of King Mark. It was suggested by the Cornish scholar, Henry Jenner, that Tristan was in reality the son of Mark, but that the situation of a son seducing his father's future wife was unacceptable to early audiences. Tristan was therefore made Mark's nephew for the purposes of the story. The ascription of such moral nicety to mediaeval readers does not quite ring true. On the other hand, the old French writers, anxious to present Tristan as a heroic and tragic figure, may have considered that if he were depicted as the treacherous son of a kindly father he would tend to lose our sympathy.

What claim has the locality of Fowey and Menabilly to be considered the *mise-en-scène* of the ancient love story? At this juncture the detective-archaeologist would play his trump card. He would invite us to follow him along the road from the Tristan memorial for a further mile and a half. The road climbs a hill ; the sheltered hedgerows of the lush little valley begin to thin out. As we approach the crest of the ridge, the landscape becomes bleak and rather austere. We come finally to a stop beside a five-barred gate which leads into a wide downward-sloping cornfield. But this field, as we shall see in the sequel, is a field with a difference. . . . Spread out in front of us, inside the field, is a barricade of trees and thick scrub, four hundred feet in length. This is Castle Dôr. Let us linger near the gate for a moment and look at the dense barrier of trees and undergrowth. When we enter the field and plunge through the bracken and brambles ahead of us, we discover that we are walking up a gentle incline. All at once we find ourselves poised on the lip of a broad ditch, twenty-two feet wide and twelve feet deep. The bottom of the ditch is full of boulders and tangled roots, and on the other side of it is a formidable earthen rampart.

Castle Dôr is a large circular earthwork, 250 feet in diameter, which consists of two ramparts and ditches, with a rather complicated entrance system. It was excavated by Mr. Raleigh Radford, President of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, in 1936 and 1937, shortly before his appointment as Director of the British School at Rome. He has stated that the excavation was begun with the proximity of the Menabilly stone expressly

in mind, "in the hope that Castle Dôr might reveal a Celtic royal seat of the earliest mediaeval period"—the royal seat of *Marcus dictus Quonomorius*. Earthworks of the Castle Dôr class usually belong, of course, to the Early Iron Age ; but one often discovers that these structures have been appropriated to house later edifices. Ten miles away from Castle Dôr, at St. Dennis, there is a church built inside an Iron Age fort. After two seasons of intensive work at Castle Dôr, Mr. Ralegh Radford had ascertained that the earliest history of the fortress extended from occupation by La Tène Celts in the second century B.C. until the site was for some reason deserted in the course of the first century A.D. But a discovery more remarkable than fragments of Continental Celtic glass armlets and sherds of delicately incised early Glastonbury pottery awaited the excavator. There came to light a complex of buildings—kitchen, granary, two large rectangular halls—which precisely fitted the descriptions given in early literature of the *dûn* or *llys* of a Celtic chieftain. Mr. Radford had found Lancien, the palace of King Mark, "the strong and high city approached by an ancient road" of the Old French writers. As he later wrote in his report: "King Mark took over the ready-made fortification, which he found deserted, and used it for the fencing of his court. Two small huts were erected to watch the gateways—lodges for the porters mentioned in romances such as *Kilhwch and Olwen*. Within arose the various buildings required for the court or palace."

But even with this astonishing discovery, unique in the annals of Celtic archaeology, our pursuit of the star-crossed lovers has not come to an end. It is seldom that the European prehistorian or parahistorian has the good fortune to link his discoveries with the name and fame of actual historical personages. When such an opportunity comes his way, he can be forgiven if he makes the most of it. Let us proceed, therefore, to enlarge our researches. First, there is the problem of the "ancient road" already mentioned. Castle Dôr, in fact, stands guard over an old Bronze Age trackway which played an important rôle in the development of early Cornish commercial and cultural life. The road ran from Fowey through Bodmin to the north coast, and along its length stood a series of stone crosses, some of which still

survive. The column at Menabilly is surely one of these stone monuments. It was along this route—shorter and safer than the sea journey round Land's End—that Tristan would bring the young princess from Ireland. The petty kings of Cornwall were, at this period, having a great deal of difficulty with the Irish, and no doubt Tristan was sent forth to fetch the "*Irishes kind*" in order to cement some form of alliance. Incursions of large numbers of Irishmen, among whom came Fingar with "seven hundred and seventy bishops," had begun in Cornwall in the fifth century, after the departure of the Roman eagles. Fingar landed at Hayle on the north coast; and no doubt the Bodmin-Fowey road was one of the adjuncts to Irish infiltration eastward and southward. It is significant, furthermore, that at this time there were raised in Cornwall stones inscribed with the runic alphabet known as Ogham, consisting of unconnected vertical strokes, which occurs mainly in Southern Ireland, but was occasionally taken over to England and used there between the fifth and seventh centuries, either alone or in conjunction with Roman letters. The Ogham stones point to a substantial Irish influence in Cornwall during the lifetime of Tristan and Isolt, an influence more than sufficient to explain the nationality of Isolt.

Second, there is the name of the palace, *Lancien*, given by the poet Bérout. The unusual word *Lancien*, written *Lantien* in Domesday Book, actually occurs in a modern form in the neighbourhood of Castle Dôr. Two miles away from the ancient fortress there is a farm called *Lantine*. As Mr. Radford observes, the farm is "the humble successor of one of the great paramount manors of the Middle Ages." The modern Lantine is in the parish of Golant or Saint Sampson; and in Bérout's epic it is in the church of "Saint Sanson" that Tristan worships with Isolt. Close to Lantine stands the Priory of Saint Andrew, to which the church of Saint Sampson belonged, and it is by Saint Andrew that Bérout makes King Mark swear. These and other linguistic parallels were first compiled half a century ago by J. Loth, the famous French Celticist. Many of the parallels are so striking—so cleverly worked out, yet so free from the taint of philological perversity—that some of them deserve to be mentioned in this essay in detection.

Thus Bérout's *Morrois*, the forest in which the lovers hid from King Mark, may possibly be in the countryside in the neighbourhood of the manor of *Moresk*. The Evil Ford, *le Mal Pas*, may be the modern crossing of the river at *Malpas*. The White Land, *la Blanche Lande*, may be the manor of *Tir Gwyn*, modern *Chirgwin*, the Cornish equivalent of *White Land*. The downs at Chirgwin are strewn with white quartz, and Loth says that "a great part of the manor is literally a White Plain." Perhaps the most ingenious parallel, however, is the one adduced to explain the description of Tristan's great leap, an account of which is given by Malory. Tristan, under sentence of death, was being taken by his guards to the place of execution when the party passed a small chapel on the edge of a towering cliff. Tristan asked permission to enter it alone in order to make a last prayer. Once inside, he bolted the door and jumped from the window on to the beach below and made his escape. Bérout writes that no such feat had been seen before "from Constantin to Rome." There seems to be no problem here: Bérout means, quite simply, "from Constantinople to Rome." But does he? Could not *Constantin* be the large village of *Constantine*, with its beautiful church? Could not *Rome* be a clerkish mistake for *Rame*, a mistake which has been made by printers in our own day? The leap would therefore be renowned "from Constantine to Rame," which means the major sixty-mile stretch of the south coast of Cornwall. This parochial simile surely sounds more accurate.

To Loth fell the distinction of discovering in a Cornish charter of 967 an occurrence of the name *Eselt*, in connection with a *Hryt Eselt* or Ford of Isolt in the parish of St. Keverne. The name Isolt is a curious one. In the form of *Isolt* it is undoubtedly neither Welsh, Breton nor Irish, whatever its ultimate origin, but Cornish. Loth believed the name of Tristan to be Welsh; but there seems no good reason for not considering the word *Tristan* to be Cornish also. It would seem, in fact, that Thomas and Bérout must have based their poems either on the recital or reminiscence of a wandering Cornish bard, or else upon an actual composition in the Cornish tongue which is now lost to us. E. K. Chambers has written: "The *Tristan* is probably an exceptional case of a more or less wholesale

transference of a story from Celtic to French. There are Breton and French elements as well as Cornish. But in the main the narrative may well have taken shape in Cornwall, much as it appeared in the early French *estoire*. Its setting is Cornish and its insular geography more precise than in the romances."

What are we to say about Tintagel, the legendary birthplace of King Arthur, which figures in all later versions of the story of Tristan and Isolt? We shall deal with this matter briefly and circumspectly. Although the connection of Arthur with Tintagel has long ago been shown to be entirely groundless, the wound still rankles in Cornish breasts. When, in Jenner's courageous address, the horrid truth was at last made irrevocably public, a patriotic Cornishman is said to have committed suicide. It must therefore be sufficient to say that the connection of the lovers with the castle "situated on the sea and encompassed by it on every side" occurred late in the evolution of the story—after Geoffrey of Monmouth had located the palace of the Dukes of Cornwall and Arthur's birthplace at Tintagel in his immensely popular *History of the Kings of England*, written in the twelfth century. Whether Geoffrey transferred the early capital of Cornwall from Lancien to Tintagel because of a genuine historical error, or because of the storyteller's instinct for artistic improvement, is not known. The popular esteem which Tintagel enjoys has been intensified by later works of art. It is difficult for the reader to escape the sonorous magic of the *Idylls of the King* or for the concert-goer to elude the spell of Sir Arnold Bax's tone-poem. Even the most matter-of-fact archaeologist is willing to concede that if Tintagel was not the home of King Arthur it ought to have been. Similarly, few scholars will sincerely regret the fusion of the destiny of Tristan with the destiny of Arthur.

We have now reviewed the evidence for the identification of the actual background of the Cornish tale. In the light of the archaeological researches at Castle Dôr, and of the philological researches concerning the Menabilly stone, this evidence may be regarded with some confidence as decisive. In their own fashion, the efforts of the scholars concerned may be compared to the labours of Schliemann at Troy or of Evans at Knossos ; for, while the Mediterranean archaeologists revealed

the real personalities and actual events that formed the basis of the Homeric legends, the workers in Cornwall discovered the characters and events underlying one of the finest stories of the world of the Western Celts. The methods they employed were not unlike those of Evans and Schliemann ; and thanks to them Tristan and Isolt have moved into the sunlight of reality. It may be that some critics will regret their emergence. They will feel that the archaeologist has served the world of make-believe an ill turn by revealing the lovers as a pair of quasi-barbarians and by reducing the turreted palace of Lancien to a collection of huts within a primitive earthwork. But there are others who will not share this view. We live in a century which possesses an informed taste for realism ; and few would now consider that King Arthur is belittled because he has been shown to be a patriotic country gentleman and not the world conqueror of Geoffrey's fantasy. King Mark did not grieve the less for the dead Tristan because Lancien was a place of modest size. Isolt did not weep less bitterly for her dead lover because he was not buried in the splendid tomb described by the Old French authors. It is still a moving experience to stand in front of the stone column and read upon it the crudely cut inscription, with the rustic IACIT for IACET, couched in the bygone imperial tongue. DRUSTANS HIC IACIT CUNOMORI FILIUS. In its way, the simple and dignified epitaph, endorsed by the native king, is as evocative as the epic poems which were to follow it.

The rough-hewn quality of the original drama adds to its appeal. Modern archaeologists enable us to stand on the wind-swept ridgeway and follow the course of the unhappy cavalcade as it wound up the hill—that of the reluctant Tristan bringing to his father the girl with whom he had fallen in love on shipboard. As the knight, the lady and their escort jingle along the trackway, and see before them the minatory roofs and wooden ramparts of Castle Dôr, already an antiquity in their own time, the lovers exchange a secret, troubled glance. “To tell the joys that were betwixt La Beale Isoud and Sir Tristram, there is no tongue can tell it, nor heart think it, nor pen write it.” Early in our discussion we quoted a passage from the libretto of Wagner's opera. Let us conclude by quoting a passage from the *Morte d'Arthur*, a book that conveys the



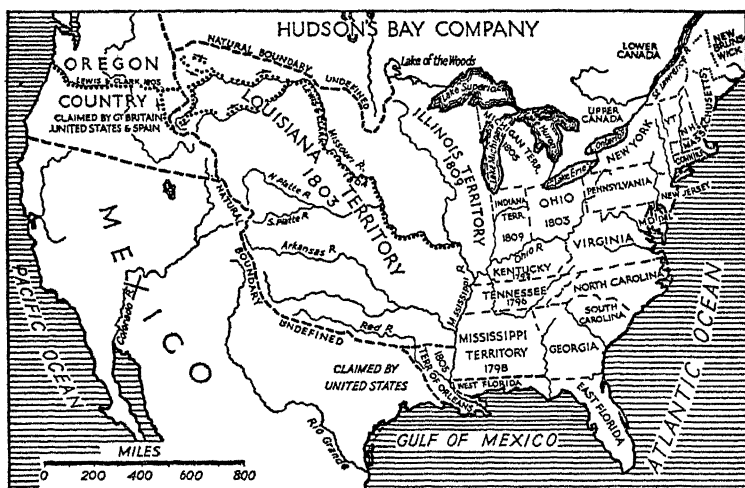
legend's quintessential flavour : " And then anon Sir Tristram took the sea, and La Beale Isoud ; and when they were in their cabin, it happed so that they were thirsty, and they saw a little flacket of gold stand by them, and it seemed by the colour and the taste that it was noble wine. Then Sir Tristram took the flacket in his hand, and said, Madam Isoud, here is the best drink that ever ye drank, that Dame Bragwaine, your maiden, and Gouvernail, my servant, have kept for themself. Then they laughed and made good cheer, and either drank to other freely, and they thought never drink that ever they drank to other was so sweet nor so good. But by that their drink was in their bodies, they loved either other so well that never their love departed for weal neither for woe. And thus it happed the first love betwixt Sir Tristram and La Beale Isoud, the which love never departed the days of their life."

# THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE, 1803 : AMERICA MOVES WEST

by Arnold Whitridge

ON MAY 2ND, 150 YEARS AGO, two American diplomats signed a treaty in Paris in accordance with which the United States acquired 900,000 square miles of territory. Out of this enormous tract, known as the Louisiana Purchase, were carved Louisiana itself, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and the greater part of Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. The price of this block of real estate, plus the assumption of certain claims of American citizens against France, came to fifteen million dollars. The interest payments incidental to the final settlement raised the total eventually to \$27,267,622, or about four cents an acre. The diplomats engaged in these negotiations, Robert R. Livingston and James Monroe for the United States, Talleyrand and Barbé-Marbois for France, had been haggling over the transfer of New Orleans and the delta of the Mississippi from France to the United States for over a year. Not one of them guessed, when the negotiations began, that General Bonaparte, at that time First Consul of France but actually dictator, would suddenly decide to liquidate the French empire. When the General offered a favour suitors did well to waste no time in acceptance. In signing the treaty, therefore, the Americans acted without the knowledge or authorization of President Jefferson or of James Madison, his Secretary of State.

The four diplomats involved were all distinguished men. Livingston was a prominent member of a great New York family, a member of the committee which drafted the Declaration of Independence, and a former Chancellor of the State of New York. He had refused a post in Jefferson's cabinet before he was asked to go to France as Minister. In the days before the telegraph and the steamboat, an American minister to



The United States, 1803-1812

Europe was forced to act on his own initiative in times of crisis. Livingston did not complain. Sometimes he may have resented being left in the dark as to the Administration's wishes, but he suffered from no doubts of his own ability to grapple with any diplomatic problem that might arise.

To help him in his negotiations, Jefferson sent over as his special representative James Monroe, whose name is now associated with one of the chief dogmas of American foreign policy. This rather colourless man had already had a notable career as Minister to France and as Governor of Virginia, thanks, according to his biographer, to "untiring application and indomitable perseverance." In another fourteen years this same application and perseverance would open the doors for him into the White House. His arrival in Paris, just in time to figure in the negotiations initiated by Livingston, was not welcomed. Livingston felt perfectly capable of conducting negotiations by himself. In recounting the events afterwards he always insisted that the terms of the purchase were practically agreed upon before Monroe presented his credentials. Monroe, on the other hand, contended that Napoleon's abrupt decision coincided with the news that the American Minister Plenipo-

tentiary, bringing fresh demands with him, had landed at Havre.

Of the two French negotiators Talleyrand, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, was unquestionably the more formidable. As a political exile he had sought refuge in America, where he lived for two years, but unlike most of his compatriots he had returned to Europe with a dislike for the American people. There was no market in the new world for his elegant irony, no inclination to condone his faults, no demand for his peculiar talents. This dislike of America was sharpened by his failure to extract a bribe from American commissioners recently sent over to adjust outstanding claims with the French government. It was made clear to them that it would be useless to open proceedings until they had made a substantial present to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Instead of digging into their pockets, the indignant commissioners immediately returned home and published the facts to the world. Talleyrand never forgave them. Personal resentment, therefore, as well as colonial ambition for France, always coloured his relations with American ministers. Talleyrand was a more ardent advocate of American colonization than Napoleon himself, and it was he who inspired much of the enthusiasm for overseas projects.

Barbé-Marbois, Napoleon's director of the Treasury, was less venal than Talleyrand and better disposed towards America. An honest politician, he served successive régimes in France to the best of his ability. His knowledge and friendly understanding of the United States had been strengthened by several years' residence as consul in Philadelphia and by an American marriage. At the same time he was a shrewd bargainer. When Napoleon suddenly decided to bring the discussions to an end by offering for sale the whole of Louisiana, Barbé-Marbois, perhaps more alive to the value of the colony, did not hesitate to raise Napoleon's demand from fifty to a hundred million francs. In the end they compromised on a total payment of eighty millions.

These then were the men who, brought together to discuss the sale of New Orleans, signed a treaty that doubled the territory of the United States, and that Jefferson fondly believed would separate Americans forever from the affairs of Europe.

Throughout the discussions the Frenchmen were in a more strategic position for bargaining than the Americans, as they could always fall back on the impossibility of persuading the First Consul to agree to any concessions. Lack of time—it was always possible that General Bonaparte would change his mind—prevented Livingston and Monroe from consulting Washington. They knew that Jefferson had the warmest feelings for France, but even Jefferson had admitted that France and the United States could never live happily side by side. In order to maintain good relations, France would have to lay the ghost of a French colony in the Mississippi valley. No wonder Jefferson was alarmed when he saw the world's foremost military power, directed by one of the greatest soldiers of all time, about to occupy a position of such importance to the United States. "The day that France takes possession of New Orleans," wrote Jefferson, "we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation." When Livingston opened that letter he must have wondered whether war could possibly be avoided.

Those like Jefferson who knew the temper of the west had foreseen that westerners would not long remain in the Union unless the government could secure for them free navigation on the Mississippi. The surplus crops of the west were already finding their way to a market. From the farm where they were grown the cargoes of wheat and corn, meal and flour, pork, bacon, and whisky, were floated south down the Ohio and the Mississippi. In the long trip, drifting by day and tied to some convenient shore by night, the farmer boatmen had time to gossip over the trade in which they ventured.

As long as Spain was in control of the Mississippi they felt tolerably safe. Spain at the beginning of the nineteenth century was an easy-going nation unwilling or unable to interfere with the activities of American frontiersmen. But when rumours reached American ears that Spain had been forced to sell Louisiana the *dolce-far-niente* picture changed overnight. Spain could be bluffed or bullied, but an eager France, determined to re-establish her American empire, presented a very different problem. As westerners discussed their fate, New Orleans officials quietly posted a proclamation ending the right of up-river exporters to deposit their produce at New Orleans and

thence export them. Actually, France had nothing to do with the order, which was a belated Spanish attempt to put a stop to smuggling. But the frontiersmen knew nothing of these circumstances. In their eyes this was an example of the treatment they could expect from the new masters of the Mississippi.

Meanwhile Jefferson's enemies had been busily fomenting the already existing unrest on the frontier. They wanted an immediate settlement of the Louisiana question, and they accused Jefferson of hopeless vacillation, not realizing that he had his own devious ways of getting what he wanted. At the same time that he was expounding his political philosophy to Livingston, he was in constant touch with a French economist friend, Pierre Samuel Du Pont. Du Pont had been one of the most ardent supporters of the American colonists. After the war was over he continued to consider himself a link between France and the young republic of the west, and he placed at the disposal of his friends in both countries his wide knowledge of men and affairs. Towards the end of his life he settled in America, and it was his son who founded the powder mill at Wilmington which developed into the company that has played such an important part in the industrial growth of the United States.

Jefferson's friend, a far-sighted engineer, economist, philosopher and man of the world, pointed out that General Bonaparte was always in need of money, and that though he would never agree that Americans had any God-given right to devour the whole continent, he might well be persuaded to sell New Orleans and the Florida territory. True to his training and to his doctrine, Du Pont devised an economical solution to a political problem. As it turned out, Napoleon was even more in need of money than Du Pont guessed. By the year 1803 he was beginning to feel that Talleyrand's policy of restoring the peace in Europe and directing the energies of France towards the creation of an empire in the new world could never be realized. The policy hinged on the French possessions in the West Indies, and of those possessions the most important was St. Domingo, more familiarly known today as Haiti.

At the outbreak of the French Revolution nearly two-thirds of the commercial interests of France were centred in this island.

Paris swarmed with Creole families who drew their incomes from the sugar, coffee and cotton grown in the West Indies. No doubt General Bonaparte heard a good deal about the West Indies from his wife, Josephine de Beauharnais, who came from an old but impoverished Martinique family. The turmoil of the Revolution, followed by the liberation of 500,000 negro slaves, left behind it in St. Domingo a trail of desolation and misery. Unfortunately for France, a remarkable negro, Toussaint de l'Ouverture, had set his heart on establishing in St. Domingo an independent state. If he had not defied Napoleon the wave of French empire would have rolled on to Louisiana and swept far up the Mississippi. His defiance ended in surrender and death, but the French troops who were unlucky enough to be sent out to quell the revolt paid a high price for what was to prove only a temporary success. No sooner had reinforcements arrived than they were consumed by the ferocity of the black army and the ravages of yellow fever. When the hard truth came home to him that there could be no enduring restoration of French rule in St. Domingo, Napoleon's American projects received a staggering blow from which they never recovered.

So long as there was any chance of rebuilding his colonial empire, Napoleon was careful to avoid any move that might lead to hostilities with England, but with the failure of the St. Domingo venture his thoughts turned back to Europe. England now stood out as the one opponent in Napoleon's war to end war. As he girded himself for the struggle he must have known that his American possessions would fall an easy prey to the British navy. St. Domingo was the gate to the western empire. Once he had convinced himself that he could not hold the gate, the nebulous empire beyond had to be abandoned too. Even if the hated British did not seize it, he would ultimately lose it to America. Granted the character of the American pioneer, there was no bulwark France could oppose to the rising tide of American expansions. Why not sell to those insistent Americans not just New Orleans but the vast territory of unknown extent west of the Mississippi? He would demand a good price for it, and the money would go towards reconditioning his navy for the invasion of England. In the end

Louisiana was sacrificed to the building of flat-bottomed boats that were to rot in Boulogne harbour, just as the boats of another dictator were to rot in that same harbour one hundred and thirty-seven years later.

Plans for the invasion may well have been coursing through Napoleon's mind when he summoned Talleyrand immediately after High Mass on Easter Day, 1803, and announced that he was going to sell Louisiana to the Americans. He had already tried to convince his brothers Joseph and Lucien of the necessity for the sale, but with little success. Lucien, the more combative of the two, pointed out that the French constitution forbade alienation of national territory without a vote of the legislature. Not only that, insisted Lucien, but Napoleon had not performed his part of the agreement with Spain, and therefore Louisiana was not his to sell. So infuriated was Napoleon by the legalistic arguments of a younger brother that he dashed his snuff-box to the floor and drove Lucien out of the room. He had every right to lose his temper since he knew perfectly well that Lucien was right.

According to the Treaty of San Ildefonso which Lucien Bonaparte, on the orders of his brother, had helped to negotiate only three years before, Spain had agreed to give back the Province of Louisiana that she had received from France at the end of the Seven Years War. In return for Louisiana Spain was to receive a large slice of territory in Italy, to be known as the Kingdom of Etruria. France must also guarantee to secure the consent of the other powers to the changes in Italy. Napoleon had been so excited by the acquisition of Louisiana and the prospect of a colonial empire in America that he quite forgot his share of the bargain. Instead he set to work to link Louisiana to the French islands of the West Indies by supplying those islands with articles hitherto purchased from the United States. Where an earlier generation of French colonial officials had sought to connect Louisiana and Canada by a chain of fortifications, he would bind Louisiana to the West Indies and to Europe by trade.

The terrible experiences in San Domingo altered the whole picture. The enthusiasm over the colonies, so carefully nurtured by Talleyrand, turned first to indifference then to disgust.



In an unguarded moment Napoleon was heard to exclaim, at an official dinner, "damn coffee, damn sugar, damn colonies." The dream of West Indian armadas, and of a thriving French civilization across the seas, melted overnight, and along with it melted the promise to make a young Spanish duke King of Etruria. Lucien's arguments and Talleyrand's regrets, though Talleyrand was too much of a sceptic to regret anything for long, were brushed aside. The only thing that remained was the nuisance value of Louisiana. It must be sold at once, and the American negotiators must be made to pay a good price. As for Spain, she was in no position to make her complaints heard.

On Easter Monday, therefore, the very day after Talleyrand and Barbé-Marbois had had their interview with Napoleon, Mr. Livingston was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Once again the American Minister trotted out the old familiar arguments. The United States cared nothing for Louisiana, but wanted only West Florida and New Orleans—"barren sands and sunken marshes," he said; "a small town built of wood; . . . about seven thousand souls"; a territory important to the United States because it contained the mouth of some of their rivers, but a mere drain on the resources of France. Talleyrand had heard it all before. He listened politely and, when Livingston finally paused for breath, he broke in with his momentous question: "What will you give for the whole?" for a moment Livingston, who was slightly deaf, did not understand. When he finally grasped what he was being offered, he was careful not to appear too eager. The matter demanded reflection. He must consult Mr. Monroe, but in the meantime he would be glad to meet Barbé-Marbois and explore the possibilities.

Negotiations got under way at once, and within a week the main outlines were settled. Monroe himself was so ill he remained on the sofa throughout the discussions. Both parties understood that they must reach a decision quickly. Napoleon's brothers were known to be bitterly opposed to the sale, and it was a question how far their family loyalty could be stretched. If the negotiations dragged on, the secret was bound to leak out and Napoleon might find himself compelled to disown the

whole scheme. Under these conditions Livingston did well to stop haggling and to agree to Barbé-Marbois' terms. The documents were signed on May 2nd, but the treaties were antedated April 30th, the day the agreement was reached.

Elated though they were at having bought an empire, the American diplomats must have had serious misgivings as to how their treaty would be received at home. They had been authorized to obtain New Orleans and as much of the Florida territory as they could secure east of the Mississippi, but what they had actually done was to buy New Orleans and a vast undefined stretch of territory west of the Mississippi. When they asked for a clearer definition of the boundaries they met with no satisfaction. "I can give you no direction," said Talleyrand, "you have made a noble bargain for yourselves, and I suppose you will make the most of it." The United States had bought what originally belonged to France, no more and no less. During the forty years of Spanish administration the boundaries had not changed. So sketchy were the maps that Livingston understood that western Florida was included in the purchase. Talleyrand did not disabuse him. He was quite sure in his own mind that Florida still belonged to Spain, but it would do no harm if the Americans and Spaniards developed a little quarrel of their own over frontiers. In all these discussions he was no doubt acting under orders of Napoleon, who always drafted his treaties in such deliberately ambiguous language that he could interpret them as he chose.

Monroe was therefore quite wrong in assuming that "the cession of Louisiana was an act of great and enlightened policy rather than an affair of commerce." There was nothing enlightened about Napoleon's decision. He acted from a variety of motives, but altruism was not one of them. As it turned out, the acquisition of the new territory, though it was destined to make the United States a great power, was to have a curiously different result from what Napoleon expected. For the next hundred years, instead of becoming a great naval power, the United States concentrated on the development of its vast empire and left England in undisputed possession of the seas.

But Napoleon had still another object in mind. He wanted to strengthen the United States temporarily so that she might

act as a counterweight against England, and yet he hoped to prevent the rise of any world power in the western hemisphere. The experience of history proved that a republican form of government, which Napoleon detested, could only thrive in a small state. Thus by doubling the size of the United States he calculated that he was sowing the seeds of her eventual dissolution. Sooner or later the unwieldy republic would split apart, and the various pieces might well be snapped up again by the European powers. Jefferson himself accepted the possibility of fission, but he was not disturbed by it. Whether the United State remained one confederacy, or split into Atlantic and Mississippi confederacies, would not affect the happiness of either part.

The only thing that mattered to Jefferson was that Europe should be excluded from the new world. In his inaugural address he had spoken of America as a chosen country with room enough for its descendants to the thousandth generation. Now suddenly he was proposing to double the area of the Union on the plea of security. It was a strange fate indeed that required the author of the Declaration of Independence to buy a foreign colony without its consent, and to annex it to the United States by an act which he himself admitted made blank paper of the constitution. Even more strange was the theory, new to international law, that security meant freedom from the contiguity not of an enemy but of a former ally. No doubt it would have suited Jefferson better to secure the passage of an amendment to the constitution authorizing the acquisition of territory, but there was no time for these niceties. Livingston and Monroe advised him to close the transaction as soon as possible in case Napoleon should change his mind.

The treaty, consisting of three agreements dealing with the cession of territory, the payment and the claims of American citizens, was accordingly submitted to both Houses at a special session of Congress. It was ratified by the Senate, October 20th, by a vote of twenty-four to seven. In the debate in the House of Representatives on the appropriation of the necessary funds, a few members objected to the admission of a foreign people to the Union. Others argued that the price was exorbitant, and that the boundaries had been purposely concealed by France,

but the opposition was half-hearted, and the fifteen millions were appropriated by a vote of ninety to twenty-five. Those who objected were the New Englanders, who realized that with the addition of this new territory the balance of power would inevitably turn against them.

Gouverneur Morris, one of the disgruntled Federalists, did not think it mattered whether the treaty were constitutional or not, for "at the rate things are going, the Constitution can not last long, and an unbalanced monarchy will be established on its ruins." Whatever the form of government adopted, he considered it important to resist every attempt made by foreigners to interfere in American domestic concerns.

There still remained one problem—that of the attitude of the French and Spanish inhabitants, who were being handed over from one nation to another without any consideration of their own wishes. For some reason, inexplicable to Jefferson, the Louisianians believed that French or Spanish sovereignty, despite its political absolutism, was more congenial to their easy-going way of life than the authority of the republican but officious Americans. Jefferson forestalled any danger of an anti-American demonstration by despatching troops to the scene, and the French prefect co-operated by organizing a fête in New Orleans on the day of transfer. The celebration began at three o'clock in the afternoon and lasted until nine the following morning. Toasts were drunk in wines appropriate to the three nations, madeira for Jefferson and the United States, malaga for Charles IV the King of Spain, and pink and white champagne for Bonaparte and the French Republic. Dancing continued through the night.

In this way all possible unpleasantness was averted, and Jefferson may well have settled any qualms of conscience by reflecting that the government of Louisiana rested, if not on the consent of the governed, at least on their indifference. He had already decided that the affairs of the territory should be administered by a Governor and a Council appointed by himself. At the same time he promised, in accordance with the formula approved by all imperialist powers, that a form of government would eventually be prepared for the inhabitants "as mild and free as they are able to bear."

Jefferson was never worried by the inconsistency of not allowing Louisiana self-government until a swarm of American pioneers had prepared French and Spanish residents for the necessary change. In weighing the national interest against constitutional propriety he found no difficulty in making his choice. It is easy to accuse him, as we accuse all those who hold high office, of sacrificing principles to expediency, but today, one hundred and fifty years after the event, any one who follows the meandering negotiations that finally led to the Louisiana Purchase will be more than ever convinced that Jefferson was a great statesman as well as a master politician. No one could have been more surprised than he when he opened the despatch from Livingston and Monroe informing him that they had bought an empire instead of a city, but he accepted the grave issues involved in this staggering deal without hesitation.

He himself wanted to be remembered as the author of the Declaration of Independence, of the statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and as the father of the University of Virginia, but posterity would do well to remember him also as the man who doubled the area of the United States. By so doing he created that vast reserve of free land that has done so much to shape the course of American history. By nature and habit the American is restless. Undoubtedly he was destined to inherit the earth from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but it was the quick action of Livingston and Monroe in accepting Napoleon's offer, combined with the magnificent inconsistency of Jefferson, that hurried the American into his inheritance.

# QUEEN VICTORIA IN IRELAND, 1853

by Joseph Hone

ON AUGUST 29TH, 1853, the following message was transmitted from Dublin by *Saunders News Letter* to the Belfast *Northern Whig*, via the new *Magnetic Telegraph Company* :

The Queen is in Ireland. The Queen and Royal Party arrived at Holyhead at six-thirty on Saturday evening. They left Holyhead at half past two on Monday morning. Arrived at Kings-town a few minutes after eight. Landed at that harbour at six minutes past ten, and arrived in Dublin terminus at forty minutes past ten. The Lord Mayor and Corporation were present in robes of state. Her Majesty looked and expressed herself highly gratified at the arrangements which were magnificent. The procession has just passed the Bank. The enthusiasm is extreme.

The new harbour at Holyhead had been selected as the rendezvous of the Royal Squadron and the port from which Her Majesty should leave for Ireland. She was accompanied by the Prince Consort and her two elder sons, Prince Albert Edward and Prince Alfred. A gale had delayed the departure from Holyhead, but the Prince had turned the time to good account by inspecting the work on the quarries.

It was not the Queen's first appearance in this portion of her Dominions ; nor was it to be her last. But in all her long life she was to spend less than two months in Ireland ; and commentators on her reign have frequently asked whether, if she had shown her Irish subjects greater signs of affection, the Union might not have been preserved. Her opportunity of thus influencing the course of events, if it ever existed, was probably lost in the first years of her reign when the Catholic masses had for the last time a leader who was avowedly a royalist, sincerely attached to the link of the Crown. O'Connell had welcomed her accession with enthusiasm ; and at a " monster "

meeting at Bandon (December 5th, 1839) he had expressed the hope that her marriage with Prince Albert would prove as fruitful as that of his own grandmother who had borne twenty-two children, and thus provide "impressive securities" against the succession of the Duke of Cumberland, a whilom Master of the Orange order, or of any of his breed. "I'd get in one day," he declared amid "awful" cheering, "500,000 brave Irishmen to defend the life, the person, and the honour of the beloved young lady." No wonder that the Queen thought he was "behaving very well."

Relying upon Victoria's friends, the Whigs, O'Connell was prepared (so he said) to drop Repeal and "amalgamate with the whole Empire." His conditions, however, would have been impossible for any government of that period to meet without provoking a Protestant revolution in both islands, for they would have virtually established a Catholic ascendancy in the smaller one, and on the return of the Tories to power he resumed with redoubled violence the agitation for Repeal. Yet even at the height of his defiance of the "Stunted Corporal" (Wellington), he continued to distinguish between national independence and separation and reasserted his attachment to the person of the young Queen.<sup>1</sup>

When at last, in 1849, the Queen called upon her Irish subjects, O'Connell was dead, his country had passed through the Great Famine, had made (after his death) a pathetic little contribution of its own to the revolutions of '48, and the Whigs were again in office. On her way to Scotland by sea with the Prince Consort she had landed at Cork, Dublin (where she stayed for a week, and held a levee) and Belfast, and had been highly delighted with her reception in all three towns—Belfast moved her least and she never revisited it. Her state entry into Dublin had been a triumph, all the more remarkable, as she herself observed, "when one reflected how lately the country had been in open revolt and under martial law." "Everthing seems to have gone off according to our hearts' desire," the Viceroy, Lord Clarendon, informed a colleague. "Even the ex-clubbists are now among the most loyal of her subjects.

<sup>1</sup> His *Memoir of Ireland* (1843) was "humbly inscribed to her most gracious Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain and IRELAND."

When one considers how many things might have gone wrong in bringing this strange people into communication with the Sovereign for the first time, it is marvellous that during eight days not a single act should have occurred differently from what one would have wished."

But in John Mitchel's famous *Jail Journal* (he had been transported to Tasmania) will be found the entry, "Plenty of blazing, vociferous excitement. *Loyalty*, you are to know consists in a willingness to come out into the streets to see a pageant pass." And even in England some voices had been raised in derision. There was this comment in *Punch* :

They talk mighty big of the good that will come  
From your kindly look in on poor Pat and his home,  
So whisht while I tell you what's less pleasant than true,  
What sights you ne'er saw, what your visit can't do.

And Croker, resentful of the effort of the Whigs to make party capital out of the popular show of enthusiasm, had reminded his readers in the *Quarterly* of George IV's gesture of friendship for the Irish people. It had been "early and generous." He had come to Ireland immediately after his Coronation. . . . Was there any reason to suppose that the Queen's visit, so long delayed, "had anything in its character calculated to produce a better result?"

The Queen, it is true, had not been guided by her advisers to those areas of Ireland where in the months following her visit 700 inquests were held upon people who had died of starvation. She had not dropped in, as Mitchel said, upon the peasantry to share their "homely fare," as was her custom in Scotland. But after all what was claimed for the royal smile was not an economic miracle but a cure for what an *Edinburgh* reviewer, in an eulogy of Clarendon's administration, described as "the infatuation of Young Ireland and the wicked delusion of Repeal."

No party significance could be attached to the royal visit of 1853. Its occasion was an Industrial Exhibition, modelled on the Great Exhibition of 1851, the first of the imitations of that masterpiece. It was therefore an Irish compliment to the Prince Consort, and the Queen would have come for the opening had



it not been for illness in her family. The chief promoter of the enterprise was William Dargan, in whom Ireland had at last found a voice for the prevailing idea of the age, the bringing of moral and rational good into harmony with the increase of production, scientific knowledge and liberal sentiment. One of the first Irishmen who could be called a capitalist, his had been one of those spectacular careers, less common in Ireland than elsewhere in the early era of industrial development. The son of a tenant farmer in Carlow, his first employment had been that of a time-keeper on the mail coach road to Holyhead; a gratuity of £300 from the Lords of the Treasury to whom he had been commended by Telford "the Colossus of Roads," started him on his career as a contractor. In 1832 he undertook the construction of the ten-mile railway between Kingstown and Dublin, the first Irish railway and the second railway in the United Kingdom, and he was subsequently connected with the building of longer Irish lines, tunnels and canals. For the Exhibition he secured the co-operation of the Royal Dublin Society who supplied the site on Leinster Lawn and "an excellent loan collection of pictures," but he stood all expenses in connection with the building and the display of home manufactures and native inventions.

As soon as the royal yacht had been secured to her moorings at Kingstown on the morning of the 29th, the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of St. Germans, went on board, where Audience was given to the Primate of the Establishment, the millionaire Lord John George Beresford, to the Archbishop of Dublin, Whately, formerly of Oxford, to Sir Edward Blakeney, a Waterloo veteran now commanding the Forces in Ireland, and to the Duke of Leinster. Dargan was not among those thus privileged; but he had travelled in the Lord Lieutenant's train to the port, and when the Queen came on shore to the blaze of artillery, he was immediately presented to her: the journalists were agreeably impressed by the cordial and lady-like way in which she shook hands with this self-made man. She wore an elegant white chip bonnet with white feathers and a light green silk *visite* over which was thrown a gorgeous Indian shawl. Her Consort was in a plain black suit with the star and garter on his breast, and the two little princes made a pretty picture

in their turned-down shirt-collars and white caps trimmed with velvet. After a few other introductions had been effected the royalties entrained and were whirled into Dublin on Dargan's little coastal line in an even shorter time than the journey had taken in 1849. Victoria's acquaintance with the Dublin and Kingstown railway dated from her girlhood ; she had, at the instance of her progressively minded mother, studied the drawings for it under the engineer, Vignoles, at Kensington Palace.

The royal party stayed for six days at the Viceregal Lodge and every day the Queen and Prince Consort were at the Exhibition. On the first morning they brought their children, the elder of whom (the future Edward VII) made his presence felt in a characteristic way by refusing to accept a catalogue, because, unlike the ones prepared for his parents, it had not been bound. The building occupied the entire space of the Lawn, once the gardens of the Duke of Leinster's town house ; the great hall was even larger than the transept of the Crystal Palace. The whole had been conceived by John Benson, a native of Sligo, who was rewarded by a knighthood. Benson had not slavishly copied Paxton ; his style is described as "horticultural Byzantine." The roofs of the larger and minor halls were barrelled like the transept of the London building ; but where Paxton had evolved a combination of glass and iron, with the Irish architect wood had taken the place of glass, and for the exterior wall of the building he had used timber up-rights. There was, therefore, not so much light in the Irish building as in the English ; but the quality compensated for the absence of quantity. The glass used by Benson was rolled and fluted, rough in surface and coloured grey-green, and thus paintings and fabrics were protected from the direct rays of the sun ; they were returned to their owners with their most delicate tints unimpaired. The Prince Consort remarked, while in the Fine Arts Court, that Benson "had solved the problem of lighting a Picture gallery."

The Exhibition was an international one ; much that was shown in both the industrial and art sections came from England or the Continent. Very properly the Queen was chiefly interested in the Irish exhibits. She spent a considerable time in the Carriage Department with Mr. Thomas Hutton, a descendant

of Birmingham Quakers, head of a firm of Dublin coach-makers, celebrated since the days of Grattan's Parliament for craftsmanship unequalled in the Three Kingdoms. Earlier in the year she had ordered from Hutton a "dress coach fully appointed for town use"; it was on show, and it is recorded that she stood before it for half an hour admiring the fine execution and finish of this vehicle, in which the present Queen of England would drive to her wedding after the passage of nearly a century. On another morning the exhibits of the two sculptors Hogan and Foley were given deserved attention, and a long hour was spent with Petrie, the celebrated archaeologist, among the relics of ancient art; one of the most extensive collections ever brought together, most of them of Irish origin. In the miscellaneous and small ware department the Prince evinced great interest in the ingenuity of a Mr. and Mrs. Gonne who had on view specimens of rare flowers modelled in wax from nature—were they forbears of Yeats's "Phoenix," Maud Gonne, a lady not distinguished by her attachment to the Throne? What seems to have impressed the Prince most of all was a novel and native process for hatching salmon. "Albert," the Queen wrote in her journal, "was especially interested, as he is in any new and useful discovery"; and she added a thought of her own: "The greater inclination of people to apply themselves to industry will be of immediate use. Mr. Dargan's history, too, they are likewise inclined to study. This is very satisfactory."

The Prince was anxious to know what would be done with the great Temple when the Exhibition closed, and at his leave-taking with the Committee he threw out a suggestion for its conversion into a great bazaar or mart, for which, he told Mr. Roe, the Chairman, "it is admirably adapted." Fortunately, the Lawn and Merrion Square, on which it gives out, escaped this permanent disfigurement; the Temple was dismantled, and on two sides of the site were erected, in the course of the next few years, a National Museum and a National Gallery—both in some degree the fruits of Dargan's patriotic exertions in 1853. In 1872, the year of Albert Memorials, a statue of the Prince by Foley, who also designed the seated central figure for the monument in Hyde Park, as well as the Selden and

Hampden in St. Stephen's Hall, was unveiled on the Lawn ; and although Fenians, or rather persons so-called, subsequently attempted to blow it up, this statue is now the solitary memorial of British royalty on view in Dublin. The Victoria brooding over her Empire on the other side of Leinster House is gone, and Grinling Gibbons's equestrian William of Orange on College Green and the charming George II in Stephen's Green have been destroyed by fanatics. Gone, too, is the George I on horseback, who peered for so long over the Lord Mayor's wall in Dawson Street, and of which, in 1717, the philosopher Berkeley witnessed the unveiling (Five pounds was charged for a seat). He was sold by the Corporation to Birmingham. If Albert has escaped, it may be because the gates of the Lawn were closed to the public during the rebellion of 1916, and have so remained since Leinster House became the Dáil.

Other royal doings than visits to the Exhibition included a drive to Howth Castle and an unannounced call on the Dargans at their handsome villa, Mt. Annville, in the suburbs. The Queen had wished to confer a knighthood upon him, but he asked to be excused. It was enough that, on her first entrance into the Royal Pavilion, she had sat on a chair upholstered in the costliest style by Mrs. Dargan. He accepted, however, another token of her esteem, the offer of busts of himself and of the Prince Consort, both in marble. The Queen invited him to choose his own sculptor, and he named Johnny Jones, a London Irishman, a friend of Thackeray's, more a wit than an artist. Poor Dargan ! His subsequent speculations, which included a project for transforming the seaside village of Bray into the Brighton of Ireland, were failures and cost him the greater part of his fortune. But he kept a place in the memory of the Queen, and on her final visit to Dublin, nearly fifty years later, she paid a tribute to his shade by driving to Mt. Annville, then become a Convent of the Sacred Heart.

Of Irish events since 1849, the most notable had been the formation of a parliamentary party of Independent opposition, represented at Westminster after the General Election of 1852 by fifty Irish members, all more or less pledged to oppose any government that did not pass a satisfactory Land Act. There was no question in Ireland to be compared in importance with

that of the land, and it had become much more acute since the Famine and the coming into operation of Clarendon's Encumbered Estates Act, which had brought the estates of bankrupt landlords into the market and so created a new race of landlords, Irish and English speculators, city men, who evicted the small holders without compunction, pasture having become since the repeal of the Corn Laws more profitable than tillage. Ninety-five per cent of the occupiers existed on the soil at the will of the landlords ; and the demands of the Tenant-right M.P.s were moderate enough : some measure of security of tenure. A few Tories and Peelites pointed out there was nothing conservative in tenancies-at-will ; but the doctrinaires who objected to interference with " natural processes " were always in a parliamentary majority, and the first chapter of the agrarian revolution remained unwritten until 1870, when Gladstone introduced the first of his Land Acts. Nor was it easy to rouse the rural masses from their post-Famine apathy. In the first panic of famine and pestilence many labourers and farmers had abandoned their holdings and emigrated without any rent being asked (between 1846 and 1851 the population of Ireland fell from over eight million to a little over six million) : Constitutional agitation and organized rebellion had alike been discredited ; and such protests as were made against capricious eviction took the form of murders of landlords and their agents.

Newman, when he came to Ireland in the 1850's to found a Catholic University, distinguished with his usual precision the " quasi-rebels " who " spoke like republicans " and the " agrarians up to Dr. MacHale." The quasi-rebels were the " ex-clubbists " to whom Clarendon somewhat hastily had given a certificate of loyalty, and Dr. MacHale, named by O'Connell the " Lion of the West," was the spokesman of the left or radical wing of the Hierarchy. He had been appointed to the Western See of Tuam in 1834, and the Vatican had shortly afterwards apologized to Wellington for sanctioning the election of " such an unprincipled agitator." In 1849 he had been Clarendon's greatest thorn in the flesh, and had spoilt the harmony by refusing to attend the Court which the Queen had then held in Dublin, on the ground that his presence could be construed as approval of an administration which he charged

with the responsibility for the death of thousands of his flock. He was now, with the support of Lucas, the founder of the *Tablet*,<sup>2</sup> seeking to re-organize the Irish priesthood as a fighting force in Irish politics, whereas the quasi-rebels, led by Gavan Duffy, a Young Irelander who had escaped Clarendon's net, saw in Tenant-right a means of attracting the Presbyterian farmers of the north into a non-sectarian national movement. But both now collided with the new Primate of Ireland, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Cullen, Pio Nono's "philosopher and friend." An extreme Ultra-montane—he had been trained by Gregory XVI—Dr. Cullen aimed at bringing the clergy into direct subjection to Rome, and, as a result of thirty years' experience on the Tiber, entertained an almost equal suspicion of the religious "liberalism" of the quasi-rebels and of the demagogues of the MacHaleites.

It was the general English opinion, shared by the Queen and Prince Consort, that in capital and the spread of non-sectarian "liberal" education, not in meddling with the laws of supply and demand, lay the best hope of turning Ireland into a contented portion of the British dominions. Nothing had given the Queen and Prince greater satisfaction during their first Irish visit than being shown round a "mixed" national school for the poor, by the two Archbishops of Dublin, Whately and Dr. Murray, an ecclesiastic of the liberal eighteenth-century type, whom they had greatly liked. In 1853 they again visited this model school, but this time there was no Archbishop in attendance. For in the interval the cause of mixed education had received a great set-back at the hands of Dr. Cullen, who immediately on his arrival from Rome in 1850 had called together at Thurles a National Synod—the first to meet in Ireland since the convention in Kilkenny under Rinuncini in Charles I's reign—and had procured from it, despite the opposition of Murray and the collaborationists, an edict condemning Peel's Queen's Colleges, and calling for the establishment of a purely Catholic University independent of State aid, of which he proposed to make Newman the first rector. On

<sup>2</sup> Lucas, an English Quaker convert, John Bright's brother-in-law and founder of the *Tablet*. The English Catholics objected so violently to his radical politics that he had to remove his paper to Dublin, where it came under the ban of Archbishop Cullen, the Primate of All-Ireland.

Murray's death in the following year Dr. Cullen had been translated from Armagh to the less venerable but more important See of Dublin, where he had continued his efforts for sectarian isolation. He had refused to take up Dr. Murray's seat on the National Board for he felt that the books supplied by Whately for the children of the primary schools were subtly subversive of the Catholic faith.

The education question had long been a cause of fruitful dissension among Irishmen. It had led to the first breach between O'Connell and the Young Irelanders, apostles of nationality without distinction of creed, and had also been a cause of conflict between Whately (already unpopular as an English intruder) and the clergy of the Established Church, the majority of whom, including the Primate Beresford, violently objected to a system in which the study of the Scriptures was not made essential. The situation threw Prince Albert into despair. "To my mind," he wrote to Lord Derby, "the great benefit conferred by the Stanley Act is not so much that it instituted united education, as that it offers a liberal and secular education to Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. The Protestant children had the Bible read to them 'at home and at Church.' In any case it was 'open to question whether the Bible should be forced upon small children'." "Look in today's newspapers," the Prince added, "at the miracle of Grenoble fully credited by the Roman Catholics of England and say whether to educate the mind irrespective of doctrinal differences is not of the first importance."<sup>3</sup>

What prospect there was of bringing South and North together in a Tenant League had vanished when sectarian animosities had been fanned into flame by Pio Nono's division of Great Britain into territorial Sees (1850), and by Lord John Russell's violent response to the Papal "aggression." A large number of Irish Catholic M.P.s led by a remarkable young orator, William Keogh, had transformed themselves into Catholic *Defenders*, and as such acquired immense prestige with the Irish masses, who, if they had ceased to hope for a solution of

<sup>3</sup> The Prince had wished to have his own children so educated; his attitude was therefore more candid than that of Parliament, which upheld denominational education in England while seeking to experiment in Ireland with secularism.

their concrete problems, could still be made happy with the generous illusion that the Holy Father relied upon them to overcome his foes. A Catholic Association was organized ; operated chiefly in Dr. MacHale's diocese where spectacular demonstrations were held at which Keogh and other of the Papal Brigadiers (as they were called) linked the cause of agrarian reform with that of the Faith in speeches denouncing the British Government and the landlords. Dr. Cullen shared Duffy's dismay, though on opposite grounds, at this harnessing together of a secular and a religious cause ; and when Keogh for private reasons resigned the secretaryship of the Association, he defied the growls of the Lion of the West, and nominated an Englishman in his place. He chose Henry Wilberforce, the Oxford convert, Newman's friend : " I really think," Keogh wrote to his fellow Brigadier, George Henry Moore,<sup>4</sup> " that the Irish like to be ridden by Englishmen. I saw Wilberforce yesterday. He looks like a perfect imbecile."

By the time that the Queen came to Ireland in 1853, the Protestant passions that had been roused by the Papal Aggression were dying down, and although Russell's Bill prohibiting Catholic Bishops from using the titles of their Sees had reached the Statute Book, it was obvious that it would never be put into operation. Indeed the chief beneficiary of the inflammatory " Durham Letter " had been Dr. Cullen, for it had made, as Newman's biographer says, any *modus vivendi* on the question of Irish education impossible. This letter, with its " mummeries of superstition," had dismayed Clarendon, for whom it was an article of Whig policy to conciliate as far as possible the Irish Hierarchy, the members of which had always freely used their territorial titles. Thus at the Court held in Dublin in 1849, Clarendon had given them, with the approval of the Queen and Prince Consort, and without protest from Lord John, precedence above the peers and only below that of the Prelates of the Established Church. No Court was held in 1853, and at the series of magnificent evening parties given by Earl St. Germans, Dr. Cullen, now becoming the surest stay of the Queen's Government in Ireland, was nowhere to be seen ; for he looked askance, as *The Times* was to write in his obituary

<sup>4</sup> Father of George Moore, the novelist.



(October 25th, 1878), at "social pleasures which threatened to blur the line between the Roman fold and that of heresy."<sup>5</sup> But she met at a Viceregal *Sourée-dansante* three of the leading Papal Brigadiers and whilom "agrarians," Keogh, Sadleir and O'Flaherty ; M.P.s who had come over to Dr. Cullen's opinion that it was the duty of Irish Catholics to take what positions of power were offered them at home or in the Empire, and had accepted office in Lord Aberdeen's Coalition government, Sadleir as a Lord of the Treasury and O'Flaherty as a Commissioner of Income Tax, and were being branded as traitors by both the MacHaleites and the Duffyites. "It is such loyalty," a Surgeon MacElrehan declared at a gathering of Dublin workmen a week after the Queen's visit, "that caused the murder of Thomas à Becket and the Christian Martyrs. It was not Caesar who caused the murder of Our Saviour but the flunkies who lived in the hearts of the Jewish people."

It is a pity that the Queen did not record her impressions of these three gentlemen. One of them, O'Flaherty, is described by Sir William Gregory in his *Autobiography* as the most avowedly unscrupulous man he ever met, but so singularly soft-hearted and kind and so full of high spirits and fun that everyone treated it as a joke. A year later this most charming of Income Tax Commissioners was in flight for America with warrants out against him for forging on bills the names of his friends Keogh and Gregory, as well as those of Lord Bolingbroke, Bernal Osborne and other highly placed persons whom he had met in the circle of his patron, the Duke of Newcastle. Then, in 1856, Sadleir, the financier of the Brigade, committed suicide, and it came to light that he had supported the credit of his Tipperary joint-stock over years by extensive frauds, among them the issue of 20,000 bogus share certificates of the Royal Swedish railway, of which he was Chairman; the crash brought ruin on hundreds of small shopkeepers and farmers. Keogh was elevated to the Irish Bench in the same year by Palmerston,

<sup>5</sup> It would be unjust to Cardinal Cullen to think of him as an ambitious politician. All his thoughts were directed to the interests of his Church. Newman, who during his Rectorship of the Catholic University was subjected by him to many painful experiences, wrote in 1879 "I used to say that his countenance had a light upon it which made me feel as if, during his many years at Rome, all the Saints of the Holy City had been looking into it and he into theirs"

who, as the Prince Consort said, had not a nice sense of honour ; he lived to be impeached by both Cullen and MacHale as a calumniator of his people and his religion.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever the Queen may have thought of this ill-fated trio they were not bidden to the dinner which she gave on her yacht on the eve of her departure from Kingstown. The skies had cleared after a week of rain ; a gay and animated crowd had assembled round the harbour, and, listening as she sat on deck after dinner to " the hum and noise and singing " on shore, she felt, as she recorded, that she had been visiting a foreign land.<sup>7</sup>

She was to see Ireland twice again. In 1861 she visited Killarney with the Prince, and nearly forty years later, during the Boer War, she stayed for a fortnight in Dublin. The long interval is accounted for by certain untoward incidents that occurred in 1861. Some remark that the Prince had privately made about the Irish being " worse than the Poles " had been given public circulation, and he was subjected to hostile demonstrations while travelling back from Killarney with the Queen ; in Dublin the windows of the Kildare Street Club were broken after he had been shown round the premises by the Viceroy, Lord Carlisle.<sup>8</sup> It was less than a year before the Prince's death ; the Queen would not forget or forgive until she was touched by the heroism of the Irish drummer boy on the Tugela.

<sup>6</sup> In consequence of his judgment in the Galway Election Petition of 1872, an anti-clerical trade, in which he vindicated Cromwell and characterized the conduct of MacHale and his clergy as the " most astonishing attempt at ecclesiastical tyranny which the whole history of priestly intolerance affords "

<sup>7</sup> A conception of Ireland that Edward VII and George V resisted, though the former is said to have finally admitted that the Pope was the " real King of Ireland."

<sup>8</sup> She had it also against Ireland, after 1861, that the Prince of Wales, then at the Curragh, had been there initiated into " dissipations that were new to him "

# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION SEEN BY A SCHOOLBOY

by J. M. Thompson

THERE IS NO SUCH THING as "a revolution." It is always this revolution or that, arising out of the special circumstances of an age, a people, a state, and following a pattern appropriate to those circumstances and impossible in any others. The impulse behind the revolutions of 1848 was the same everywhere, but the forms it assumed varied from one country to another. The French Revolution of 1789 bore a greater resemblance to the Parisian revolutions of 1830, 1848, and 1871 than to any revolutionary upheaval in England, South America, or Russia. It is therefore misleading to approach it with ready-made generalizations about the origins or the course of revolutionary movements. It must be studied from the evidence of what actually happened in Paris and France during the years following 1789. How far back one need go to discover its origins is a matter of opinion: how far forward to reach its results is a matter of choice; for they are still working themselves out.

If one concentrates on the central place and time—Paris from 1789 to 1794—the amount of evidence to be considered is still varied and immense: constitutions, laws, regulations; political speeches and pamphlets; contemporary memoirs and correspondence; the diaries and travel-stories of foreign visitors; early histories. Historians are not entirely agreed as to the relative value of contemporary and posthumous records: the first may be based on imperfect knowledge; the second may be intended to prove a theory or to defend or attack a personality or party. The ideal witness is one who is in a position to know the facts, and too impartial to distort them, and who records them at the time without idea of publication. That is why historians attach so much importance to diaries and pri-

vate correspondence. Unfortunately, people who play a leading part in revolutions seldom have the leisure to keep diaries or to write any but business letters ; or they have to be careful what they say ; or their records are destroyed by persons who may be compromised by them ; or they may themselves perish before they have put their ideas on paper. Take Robespierre, for instance : only 78 letters written by him have survived ; 14 from the years before 1789, 56 from the first four years of the Revolution (not much more than one a month), and only 8 from the last 19 months, when he was the leader of the Jacobin government. Chuquet has collected and printed 136 " Letters of 1792 and 1793," Vassière 500 " Letters of Aristocrats." Contrast the 41,000 published letters of Napoleon. Others, of course, are scattered up and down biographies, or appear from time to time in historical magazines ; but there are few continuous correspondences.

This gives special value to the letters written by Edmond Géraud from Paris to his parents in Bordeaux between 1789 and 1793 ;<sup>1</sup> a correspondence none the less important because Géraud was a schoolboy of fifteen who left home, not to take part in the Revolution, but to pursue his education at the centre of French culture. His father was a rich merchant and ship-owner at the French equivalent of Liverpool. He had already given his son a good grounding in Greek, Latin, and the French classics, and thought him well fit for the higher education that could only be got in Paris. Accordingly Edmond set off in December 1789, with a young medical student named Terrier, who was to supervise his studies, and himself to follow a course in medicine and surgery. It took the travellers six days by stage-coach (*diligence*) to reach Paris ; but they saw little of the towns they passed through—Angoulême, Poitiers, Tours, Blois, Orléans—for they generally arrived at sunset and left at two o'clock the next morning ; nor did they notice many signs of the Revolution, for the western and central provinces were those least affected by it. Arrived in Paris, they found rooms (two large and one small) in a narrow street of the students' quarter on the south bank of the Seine, for which they paid a

<sup>1</sup> *Journal d'un étudiant pendant la Révolution* ed. Gaston Maugras (Paris, Librairie Plon ed. 1910).

pound a month : they could get all their meals out at a cost of two shillings a day.

The first concern of every provincial in Paris was to see the sights, and many of Edmond's letters home describe them in terms familiar enough in other travellers' diaries : the narrow, dirty, dangerous streets of the Left Bank, the fine bridges over the Seine, the Invalides, the Champ de Mars, Nôtre-Dame, Saint-Cloud, and Versailles, which had just been left empty by the transference of the royal family to the Tuileries. But we may pass over this guide-book stuff, and ask rather what young Edmond experienced of the general feeling of revolutionary Paris. The answer may surprise those who imagine—perhaps from the films, perhaps from the dramatic style of historical painting then popular—that the streets of the capital were full of howling mobs of *sansculottes*, with *aristos* hanging from every lamp-post. "We are just as safe here as anywhere else," Terrier reported to Edmond's anxious parents, "the enemies of order are too weak and its defenders too strong for any public disturbance. Such small incidents as occur only bother the police : citizens and foreigners alike live in perfect security." And such is the report of other visitors. It was not till July 1791 (the "massacre" of the Champ de Mars), and August and September 1792 (the attack on the Tuileries and the Prison Massacres), that serious violence and bloodshed were seen in Paris. The life of the streets, the cafés, and the theatres had gone on undisturbed.

Nor was this all. Almost up to the fall of the throne in August 1792, the political changes in the country and in the constitutional position of the Crown were thought of less as a revolution than as a reform. Even after his flight to Varennes in June 1791, Louis was for a while restored to popular favour, if not respect. Edmond, after giving his parents a vivid description of the return of the royal family to the Tuileries, ended by saying : "The Assembly holds the executive power until a decision is come to as regards the King's fate. What will they do about it? It is easier to ask the question than to answer it. They say that when the King and Queen reached their rooms they wept bitterly, and the sight softened the hearts of those who saw it. But were they tears of repentance, or of disappoint-

ment? For myself, I don't mind admitting that I shall always be sorry for Louis XVI: but never for his wife: her I shall always detest." Such an attitude was not uncommon in Paris, and widespread in the provinces. When, in September, the King accepted the Constitution, and was restored to his rights, there were many, including Edmond, who doubted his honesty, and did not think the settlement would last; but it needed war, and the proof of Louis' collusion in the treachery of the emigrant nobles, to swing the country as a whole from loyalty to hatred, and from royalism to republicanism.

Meanwhile—and we must not forget it—Parisians followed their daily pursuits, and Edmond and his tutor persevered with their education. Terrier, walking the wards of the Hôtel-Dieu, the Paris hospital, was horrified to find more than 10,000 patients, sick, dying, and dead, crowded into 600 double and 400 single beds, packed from four to ten in a bed, like sardines, head to foot alternately; on the top floor a ward for convalescents was approached through the smallpox ward; operations were performed in the presence of those waiting to be operated upon; and those who had undergone the most serious operations lay in a ward next to that occupied by the insane. This survival of mediæval medicine was one of the many things soon to be reformed by the Revolution.

In education matters were much better. Edmond was not content with studying classics and mathematics in his lodgings. Three times a week he attended courses of lectures at the Collège de France—the old Collège Royale founded by Francis I, newly rebuilt and re-organized by Louis XVI. Here twenty professors taught literature, science, law, history, philosophy, and languages. Edmond took up Greek, Rhetoric, and Drawing. Under M. Sélis he read Homer's *Odyssey*; under M. Gournand he studied, nominally as an example of literary style, Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. But M. Gournand, though an ecclesiastic, was a keen revolutionist, and used his text for political propaganda. "He demonstrates convincingly," Edmond wrote, "how all Jean-Jacques' predictions were bound to come true; he explains to us all the benefits to be expected of the new Constitution; he constantly fixes our attention on the Rights of Man; he inveighs eloquently against the higher clergy, and

rails bitterly and satirically against monks and dons (at *la Sorbonne*). We notice that in all his lectures he keeps coming back to the subject of clerical marriage, and gets very heated about it: the rumour is that he has long had his eye on a lady-love" (later Edmond reports that he has married). The Revolution left its mark even on the School of Drawing, for the students wrote to ask Bailly and Lafayette to allow their busts to be displayed there, and this was done. Edmond took his education seriously. He worked for an hour or more before breakfast at 8, and again from 9 to 11 at mathematics; then came M. Sélis' lecture on Greek; then more mathematics till luncheon at 2; a walk, generally in the Luxembourg Gardens, till 4; work again, revising Horace and Tacitus, till supper and bed. In January 1791, Edmond entered his name at the newly established Lycée, where, for a fee of £5 a year, he could attend lectures by such distinguished persons as Fourcroy on chemistry and natural history, de la Harpe on literature, Sue on physiology, and Parcieux on experimental physics. Women were admitted to these courses at half price—a remarkable instance of the social changes brought by the Revolution; and the teaching was made so attractive by experiments with gas balloons, anatomical dissections, displays of monkeys' skeletons, and the like that within a month the pupils numbered nearly a thousand. "Last Saturday we had a fine concert, and a few days before a discourse attacking the barbarous superstition of duelling." Edmond, and his young brother John, who had now joined him, were enthusiastic about the Lycée. One of its greatest attractions was a big reading room, where the students could study all the leading papers, both "patriotic" and "aristocratic", and the scientific and artistic magazines; there was also a picture gallery, and a small but select library. One English periodical, *The Monthly Review*, was taken in. It is significant that the most popular paper was the evening *Postillon*, which reported the day's debates in the Assembly.

In the second year of the Lycée (1791), however, the temper was different. Partly because the lectures had become so popular, but mainly because, after the events of that summer, Paris experienced a violent reaction against republicanism, Edmond reported: "The Lycée is full of conservatives (*feuillants*),

aristocrats, and young fops, licentious, talkative, quarrelsome people. We patriots are outnumbered, and have either to keep silence or shout them down ; in fact, when these insufferable vermin come out of the lectures into the common room and start uttering detestable insults against such good patriots as Pétion, Brissot, and Vergniaud, there is nothing for it but vulgar personal abuse. You can imagine the trials that good patriots have to put up with." It is easy to see on which side "patriotism" now lay, and how completely Edmond's old loyalty to the King had been changed by the flight to Varennes and the proscription of republicanism. "They say that the king still intends to apply his infernal veto to the decree against the priests (says Edmond on December 21). I hope he will. It would open people's eyes. I agree with you (he is writing to his father) that a pretty violent crisis would be good for public affairs." And early in February 1792 he speaks of "those traitors who abuse the sacred words 'Law' and 'Constitution' so as to degrade the people under the feet of a king who is a perjured traitor, a regular tiger in a pig's skin." There is surprisingly little in the histories of the Revolution about the attitude of students as a class, so important in later revolutionary movements : here, at least, is one important item of evidence.

Another aspect of the Revolution on which this correspondence throws light is the question of the church. The Gérauds were Protestants ; and Edmond had been strictly brought up. "I am firmly convinced, *maman*," he writes home to his mother, "of the truth of all you say to me about my religion ; I never forget to say my prayers to the Supreme Being (*l'Être suprême*) morning and evening." On Sundays, he attended Protestant services at the Dutch embassy ; for at first only Catholic services were allowed in the French churches. But soon the support given by Protestant leaders to the Revolution was recognized ; interdenominational services, as we should call them, became popular, and the church of Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre was set apart for Protestant worship. Edmond often went there, and gives accounts of the sermons and services. The King's acceptance of the Constitution was celebrated by a *Te Deum* attended by the Municipality of Paris and a crowd of



Catholics : they must have been surprised to find that the so-called *Te Deum* " was composed of a number of extracts from our best poets, Racine, Voltaire, Rousseau, etc." The preacher moved his audience to tears by describing the cruel persecutions which the Protestants had suffered in past times. In a later letter, Edmond describes the church itself, a Catholic building adapted to Protestant uses : " The position of the altar is hidden by a gallery which provides plenty of accommodation. In several bays, which previously served as side-chapels, they have engraved the Rights of Man, faced by the Ten Commandments "; in other places were such inscriptions as " The citizen's duty is to worship God, to love his country, and to obey the law "; and the lines :

Peace with discipline,  
Equality without bad manners,  
Liberty without license :  
That is true knowledge.

Such inscriptions suggest another point about the " men of '89," brought out in Edmond's letters, and corroborated by other evidence. The revolutionary leaders who set the pattern of events regarded themselves not only as orderly but also as virtuous. The old régime against which they were in rebellion had been, they thought, not merely irrational, but immoral and unjust. They were going to set things right by the excellence of their conduct as well as by the justice of their ideas. When, in the winter of 1791-2, Robespierre temporarily lost his popularity, owing to his opposition to the war policy of the Girondins, Edmond was seriously distressed, because Robespierre stood for the ideal of a New Order, a virtuous and religious republic. " I admit it (Edmond writes on May 3rd, 1892) ; I had spent all my esteem and admiration on him—I might even say my affection. In this age of corruption and intrigue it pleased me to find in him those traits of virtue, generosity, and devotion which I prize so highly. I had been content to fix my eyes happily on Robespierre and Pétion : there, I said, are two leaders of whom France, free and regenerate, may well be proud—both incorruptible, both steadfast and high-principled, both worthy of the gratitude of the

true friends of liberty and of the rare laurels decreed by posterity." If Robespierre failed them, patriots like the Gérauds must fall back on Pétion. "I too," wrote Edmond's father, "have ceased to admire Robespierre. All my hopes rest on Pétion. If he ceased to be himself, that is, to be virtue, I could no longer believe anyone incorruptible." But it was a false alarm; Robespierre recovered his popularity, and lived to be the chief prophet and martyr of the Republic of Virtue.

Yet it may be asked, how could this consciousness of high ideals and virtuous patriotism persist through the undoubted crimes of 1792-4—the bloodshed of August 10th, the prison massacres of September, the régime of the Terror? Many friends of the Revolution, especially in England, were horrified at these excesses, and recanted their republicanism. Not so our eighteen-year-old schoolboy. "At last they have come," he writes enthusiastically to a friend on the day after the fall of the throne; "at last they have come—the days of the people's wrath; at last the thunderbolts of its vengeance are falling on every side—a vengeance terrible, exemplary, and memorable." He goes on to describe without a trace of pity for the victims how a body of "priests, courtiers, and domestics was captured and imprisoned"; how "at daybreak the popular executions began, the criminals were judged in batches, and given into the hands of the people, stabbed and decapitated on the spot, and seven heads carried round in the Tuileries and neighbourhood." He tells how the King, taking refuge in the Assembly, "showed nothing but a stupid and cruel apathy; he asked for a loaf and ate it coldly and heartlessly," while the Queen's sorrowful expression was "full of shamelessness and pride." "The people," he admits, "behaved brutally; but think how their conduct was justified by the aggravated crimes of the court! When you consider what these crimes have been you will judge that the people, far from needing excuses, is worthy of praise. In short, if it has been cruel, it has also been brave, virtuous and disinterested." For, if the crowds killed, at least they did not rob the bodies of the dead.

As for the prison massacres, which Edmond describes in detail, he accepts the legend that the victims were dangerous criminals—"traitors, who were secretly engaged in atrocious and

bloodthirsty plots . . . convicts, thieves, murderers, forgers of false notes. . . . All were stabbed, massacred, mutilated. . . . I myself saw seven carts chockful of corpses." But a few days later he can only see the streets full of crowds shouting *Vive la Nation!* "We do not look (wrote another witness) like a people threatened or despondent, but like one great family in holiday mood. No one who understands the French could hold any other opinion of the capital." Yet "those whose hearts are dedicated to patriotism and liberty"—such are Edmond's last words—"those who have sworn to kill the tyrants and would have no regrets at doing so with their own hands, were only waiting dagger in hand for their victims."

Edmond lived out the rest of his life at Bordeaux, writing elegant essays about mediaeval art and manners: he was one of the first of the Romantics. Was this all that the Revolution meant to him?

# LIFE IN ANCIENT CRETE

*by* Charles Seltman

AT THE TIME when the Homeric poems received their final form, the Greeks still retained a tradition that Crete, under the sway of an heroic ruler called Minos, had once been a great sea-power, embracing in a single empire all the islands and the greater part of mainland Greece. This powerful organization, we now know, began to take shape about 2,000 B.C. and increased in importance for about six hundred years. Then it came to so sudden and disastrous an end that it ceased to figure as an historical episode and passed into the realm of tradition and myth. Fifty-two years ago, Sir Arthur Evans, being greatly interested in material evidence of a bronze-age civilization in Crete, began his excavations of the Palace of Knossos and revealed to the astonished world of learning one great discovery after another ; for here was " the most ancient centre of civilized life in Greece and with it, of our whole continent." As excavation progressed, a chronological system had to be invented and used to describe the whole Bronze Age in Crete, and the pre-hellenic name " Minos " supplied an appropriate label. Accordingly the term Early Minoan was used for the period between 3000 and 2200 B.C., Middle Minoan for that between 2200 and 1500 B.C., and Late Minoan to cover the effective period from 1500 to 1400 B.C. Each of these three periods was then divided up into three sections. Year by year the uncovering of the Palace at Knossos—and subsequently of other palaces and complex Cretan buildings—proceeded ; whereupon strange facts began to emerge ; for the ancient Minoans proved to have attached importance to a number of structures, practices and pastimes which one associates mainly with modern western civilization. Light-wells, bathrooms, sanitary engineering with water-closets and easy-flushing drain-pipes had existed ; surprising costumes had been worn by women of the upper classes ; and, in addition to the trapping

and shooting of big and small game, there had been an interest in boxing and a passionate interest in the bull ring. There are three questions concerning these remarkable people which come to the mind, and to which it now seems possible to give answers. Firstly, whence did they come to Crete and when? Secondly, what kind of social structure was theirs? Thirdly, why did they invent and evolve their complicated sanitary culture and palatial civilization?

Up to the latter end of the Late Stone Age, the island was uninhabited until, about 3500 B.C., a simple seafaring folk, whose best tools and weapons were still of stone, came from Asia Minor, using the chain of islands which reach out towards eastern Crete. They landed at various points in the eastern half of the island, but did not remain on the coast where other seafarers might have molested them. Instead, they pushed inland in search of small plateaux, caves, forests, wild fruits and game—especially the large, Cretan wild-goat, whose pair of horns make a bow the efficiency of which is surpassed by the old English long-bow, but by no other. It was about 3000 B.C., in the period called Early Minoan, that more people of a like Asiatic origin moved into Crete, while an independent occupation of the southern regions of the island by people of the "Mediterranean race," coming from Libya and the region now called Cyrenaica, was simultaneously taking place. Since the latter had had considerable contact with Egypt, it is likely that they first introduced into Crete the use of copper and of bronze, as well as of gold for ornaments. The two races—Asian folk from Anatolia and Mediterraneans from north Africa—were fused to produce the typical Minoan stock which is now familiar from so many monuments. The impression is of dainty, small-boned, lithe and athletic people finely moulded, small-waisted, with black, or sometimes coppery, hair and beautiful skin, of a pale olive hue. The men are always shown as clean-shaven. Their natures must have been restless, adventurous, sometimes immensely daring, certainly inventive; and they passed on many of their qualities to the Greek northerners who destroyed their empire but mingled with them. That event occurred about 1400 B.C.; but, during the preceding fifteen centuries, it is unlikely that any major invasion took place. No

serious alteration therefore to the Minoan stock occurred, though there was probably some infiltration of new blood by way of foreign marriages, domiciled aliens, and purchased slaves.

The structure of society in Minoan Crete can be deduced, up to a point, from the discovered monuments. A fragmentary vase in black steatite, carved in relief with a procession of jovial peasants carrying winnowing fans, is evidence for an agricultural section of the people, and a seal impression of a sheep being milked for dairymen ; on seals there are hunters with bows, and on a famous Minoan gold cup from Vaphio we see trappers with a great net to capture wild bulls. Ships appear on some monuments and varied forms of marine life, whence we must assume a large population of sailors and fishermen. All these people were clearly "workers," while far above them and apart from them there existed the king, the court, the regiment of guards, and the inevitable administrative and clerical staff essential to a great palace. But, before these are discussed, the question whether there was an intermediate social class arises. To this the answer must be "probably, yes." Among the many strange finds in the great Palace at Knossos is the "Town mosaic" consisting of a fair number of little, brightly coloured faience models of the fronts of houses, each two or three storeys high, complete with front-doors and four-panel or six-panel windows. No window-glass, of course, existed, but oiled parchment or fine Egyptian linen stretched on a frame would admit plenty of light. The models resemble little detached villas—such as may be seen today in Kingston, Hendon, or other London districts—and can only have been intended as residences for citizenry. Many of the superb artists in gold, silver, ivory and stone, many of the fine painters of those days, must have belonged to that class and inhabited the little villas, as did scribes, provision merchants, importers, customs officers and other civil servants.

Royalty, courtiers and athletes were the human subjects most frequently represented in Minoan art. Though peasants and fishermen wore cloaks and square-cut Cretan breeches such as are still common in the island today, the upper class had a preference for scanty clothing. A man wore a very tight

waist-belt, a cod-piece and frequently a loin-cloth over it, boots or puttees, a jewelled collar and the hair long, like that of the women, with perhaps a love-lock over one shoulder. Since somewhat similar apparel was worn by the matadors who performed in the bull ring, there was nothing effeminate about the garb. A constricted waist was also the fashion for women and girls of the Court, skirts were full and long, plain in earlier times, but heavily flounced in the Late Minoan period ; sometimes an embroidered double-apron—front and back—was worn over the skirt. Above the waist a lady of distinction wore a short-sleeved jacket, open in front and leaving the breasts and thorax bare. These spare, well-proportioned women of Minoan Crete with firm breasts, like the women of Bali today, might retain their youthfulness far into middle life ; whereas the deep-bosomed daughters of mainland European Greeks, who took over Minoan fashions in the sixteenth century B.C., and who appeared on contemporary mainland frescoes, seem slightly ridiculous. The mode was not for such girls as looked their best in a Doric chiton or in athletic nakedness. There have been other places and times—Italy in the Renaissance, France under the Directoire, and Regency England—when two unusual fashions have coincided : a male fashion of stylized virility, and a female fashion that emphasized the breasts. But never have these modes been so marked as in Minoan Crete.

It seems safe to conclude that Crete was ruled by an all-powerful king whose royal residence was the great palace of Knossos. Tradition is so persistent and so strong about the greatness of Minos, his heroic qualities, and his far-flung naval empire, that Minos must be regarded as historical, with the proviso that the name, which is pre-hellenic, may be dynastic rather than that of a single individual. But it is not essential to assume this when we consider that one Victoria sufficed to label an era and a culture, and one Arthur to prefigure the flower of feudalism. There is a famous fresco from the palace depicting a king, clad in the manner just described, wearing an elaborate crown and walking in a garden of stylized lilies. Sir Arthur Evans called him a "priest-king," and, though this is a guess, it is probable that the king *ex-officio* filled the

highest priestly office. Unless decipherable documentary evidence should one day be found, we shall not know much about the officials in charge of Minoan cult, nor whether there was a Metropolitan and a separate priestly caste. The evidence as far as it goes is against such a possibility and in favour of the view that, as in classical Greece, priestly duties were occasional and performed by laymen.

There were other great palaces in Crete, notably at Phaistos, Hagia Triada and Mallia, which may have been smaller alternative residences for the sovereign, but more probably were palaces for other rulers, subject to the King of Knossos. As for the great palace itself, which in its final form occupied an area each side of which measured some 150 yards, the best appreciation was written by Sir Arthur Evans himself :

“The work of the spade has now brought out the essential underlying truth of the old traditions that made Knossos—the home of Minos and Daedalus—the most ancient centre of civilized life in Greece and with it, of our whole continent. It may be confidently said, indeed, that no equal plot of Earth’s surface has been productive in such various directions of so many unique records bearing on our earliest culture. Not only have we here the first evidence of an advanced linear script, but architecture is already fully developed on novel lines, and with a no less original form of fresco decoration carried to great perfection . . .”

Insuperable difficulties confront anyone who, without the aid of elaborate plans, should attempt a description of this complicated palace, which even in its ancient ruined state gave rise to the myth of the Labyrinth. It must, therefore, suffice to mention a few of the more remarkable features, such as the grand staircase with its broad steps and small risers, so easy of ascent for mounting up at least five storeys ; the bathrooms, some with full-size earthenware bath tubs, some with step-down baths of gypsum let into the floor ; the modern water-closets, originally with wooden seats, one above another on different floors ; the elaborate drains, some built of stone and lined with cement, others made of sectional earthenware pipes, and the gullies, or minor channels, running into the main system which ran out to some effluent east of the palace itself. Lastly,



mention should be made of an open conduit running down beside a flight of steps. Here, as the official guide to Knossos reports :

“ Instead of allowing the water to come down a plain incline, gathering speed the whole way and splashing over when it comes to a corner, the engineers led the water down in a series of small waterfalls ; at the bottom of each it was checked, with the result that it reached the corner at only half-speed and turned it without spilling a drop. Near the bottom are two square basins where sediment was allowed to deposit before the clean water flowed out below. Sir Arthur attractively suggests that the Palace laundry may have been here.”

The third question to be posed was, “ Why did the Minoans need to invent and evolve this complicated sanitary culture and civilization ? ” Its existence is the more surprising when a comparison is made between Knossos and other contemporary great, or greater royal residences. Neither in the palaces of the Pharaohs, nor in those of the kings of Babylon or Nineveh, nor in the castles of Anatolian Hittite princes, is there anything like it to be found. From the royal Persian residences of Persepolis and Susa, down to the palaces of the Caesars on the Roman Palatine, and on even to later periods of history, there is neither trace nor record of similar arrangements ; and it must be assumed that the duties of bath attendants and other menial offices were performed by slaves or, as in parts of the east today, by sweepers or men of low caste. In fact, ancient kings and princes could and did own great hordes of slaves, whom it was possible to maintain in any realm of great dimensions having wide food-producing areas. Minoan Crete, on the other hand, had a remarkable resemblance to nineteenth-century Britain ; for, while its sea-power was unrivalled and unchallenged, and its overseas commerce extensive and varied, the island was heavily over-populated. Any modern map of Minoan sites, known to have been inhabited in the Middle and Late Minoan periods, is evidence of this fact. The excavators have estimated the population of the city and port of Knossos, apart from the Palace, at something like 100,000 inhabitants. No guess has been made for other townships ; but the eastern and central “ Ridings ” of Crete held hundreds of towns and villages,

though the west "Riding" consisted in Minoan times mainly of moors, forests and grass-lands—a hunter's paradise.

The length of the island was only about 156 miles, and its greatest width was about 36 miles. In the west, where the wild goat still survives in some of the inaccessible gorges, the White Mountains rise up to a height of 8,000 feet. Many centuries after the fall of Knossos, when the Homeric epics were reaching their maturity, and when the Minoans had long been eliminated or absorbed, the island still retained the epithet of "ninety-citied Crete"—clear evidence that it once supported a very large population. And so it came about, for the first time in the history of the world, that men began to devise "engines" to do the work of servants, for the simple reason that great numbers of menials could not be lodged or fed. The Minoan sanitary engineer, consequently, became a man of such moment that, after the whole of civilization had been swept away, his memory passed into myth where he was second only to king Minos himself. That is the explanation of the stories about the magical Cretan artificer Daidalos, who went from one great invention to another until he equipped his own son Ikaros with wings, and disaster followed.

Within the frame of Minoan civilization there are two problems that tantalize us. One is the script, much of which survives from different periods and in different groups of characters. Up to the present little except inventories and lists seem to have come through, and these remain indecipherable; but one may be sure that a literature written upon some material other than clay once existed. The second problem is concerned with Minoan religion, for the interpretation of which the material is abundant; yet its very abundance, combined with a total lack of all contemporary written material, makes any attempt at the reconstruction of an official religion extremely hazardous. As the excavations of Knossos took their normal course, it soon became clear that numbers of precious objects, including gold engraved rings, intaglio sards and agates, ornaments and statuettes, found elsewhere, and especially on the Greek mainland long before Sir Arthur Evans began to dig at Knossos, were in reality imports from Minoan Crete. Scenes depicted on these objects, as well as abundant treasures from

Crete itself, began to be interpreted as objects replete with religious or sacral significance. In the first two decades of the present century, Frazer's "Golden Bough" dominated all archaeological thought, whensoever that thought essayed the interpretation of unfamiliar beliefs. Eminent rationalists seeking to expose what they held to be outmoded follies sought for comparable phenomena, such as trinities, resurrections, and virgin-births in other older faiths; and they failed to understand that their discoveries only proved what Erasmus had stated four hundred years before, that men can think foolishly. More recently, the swing away from rationalism, once fashionable among scholars, has moved to another extreme. Fairy-tale mysticism is to take the place of history, and wishful thinking is to rule. For example, the glorious thirteenth century is held to be the "golden age," its ghastly records of dirt and greed, of burning heretics and Constantinople given up to flame and sword, all forgotten. Central Authority, such as today only radiates from the Kremlin, prevailed during part of that highly-coloured century, and is even now sometimes prized by the illogical and pious.

This digression is necessary because several archaeologists, who have tried, from the existing monuments of Minoan civilization, to reconstruct the ancient Cretan religion, seem to have fallen into both errors. Rationalism made them see everywhere phenomena such as more recent religions might appear to travesty; while mysticism and emotion drove them to thoughtless and unscientific conclusions, unwarranted by the slender existing evidence. Cretan religion in Minoan times can be partially reconstructed by the use of two different sources. Firstly, there are the various works of art, attributable to various periods, which depict presumed "sacred persons" and furnishings in unexpected attitudes and scenes. Secondly, there are some traditions and myths about the legendary Crete of Minos which, now that so much of the material civilization has been revealed, take on fresh significance. Of these two sources the former is the more likely to produce fanciful interpretations, if it is assumed that the citizens of Minoan Crete were totally preoccupied with religious thought and practice to the exclusion of all laic interests. Yet some phenomena are really

clear. A female figure, standing upon a cairn that might be a mountain-top, flanked by a pair of lions, must be a goddess, a mistress of animals, not a mortal woman ; a goddess must also be represented in the Knossian faience figure, triple-crowned with a girdle of snakes and a snake climbing up each arm. But a lovely little ivory creature with a small headdress, who holds out two golden snakes, is so individual that, despite all earlier notions, it is safer to call her a mortal girl-priestess. A youth standing between two lions holding them by their tongues is no mortal, but a "master of animals," and therefore a god ; whereas a young hunter or warrior, with a large hound beside him, is more probably human. Objects like stylized vestigial horns, commonly called "horns of consecration," may be sacred or may be popular ornaments ; double-axes mounted on tall shafts or tree-trunks in front of which—as shown in a famous painting—a sacrifice is taking place are certainly holy cult objects ; but a man carrying a double-axe over his shoulder may be a layman, out to fell a tree or floor a foe. An actual double-axe engraved on either side with a magnificent recumbent lion can be explained as a dedication to a divine "master of animals," or as an axe that saw service during a lion-hunt, though bow, arrow and spear were the actual weapons of attack. Two of the most exquisite ivory miniature works of all time—the Oxford boy and the Toronto girl—represent a boy torero and a girl torera, not a "Boy-god" and "Our Lady of Sports"—a concept not devoid of absurdity. Indeed, the notion that Minoans went to the bull ring as a kind of congregation participating in a great act of worship has only to be suggested now to meet with instant rejection. The all-absorbing fascination which the bull ring has for modern Spaniards also held Minoans in thrall ; but it was not a religious event, even if the King himself came out with a glittering sword of bronze to give the *coup de grâce* to an exhausted bull, and even if, as a *finale*, the dead bull was sacrificed to a deity.

When phenomena of obvious religious content are compared with our other source—traditions and myths about the legendary Crete of Minos—certain interesting facts would seem to emerge. Worship of a Great Goddess, akin to the mother-goddess of all early lands bordering the Mediterranean, was of

immense importance. There was a goddess of the household in whose worship snakes played a rôle ; and it has been proved that the Greek Athene herself is in part a transmutation of this very deity. Other Cretan divine figures seem to have survived by way of names that were once titles—such as : Britomartis, a huntress ; Diktynna, goddess of fishermen ; Ariadne, meaning “ the Very Holy.” The youthful god of the Minoans was transmogrified by the Greeks when they overran Crete into a semblance—but no more than a semblance—of their own powerful male deities. For the youthful god presumably grew up ; and, if he followed the known Attis-Adonis pattern, died, only to be born again. Indeed, Cretans, to the scandal of other Greeks, claimed to possess what they called the “ tomb of Zeus.” It is a fair guess—but not a certainty—that the Cretan double-axe, an object of frequent worship, was a symbol of this god. Later, it passed, perhaps with displaced Minoans, to the Carian land of south-west Asia Minor, where it became the special symbol of the Carian “ Zeus of the Axe,” and the object was sometimes merged with a trident-head ; whence one observes a fusion of Zeus and Poseidon. We are reminded that the primitive Greek god Poseidon was “ Potei Dan ”, or “ Lord Dan ” ; while, in Greek Crete, Zeus was called “ Tan ” or “ Zan ”. They were really the same deity, the Thunderer and the Earth-Shaker, who ruled respectively land and sea. If ever people had need for an earthquake god, it was the Minoans ; for Knossos was laid low time and again by violent seismic action ; and the very ease with which successive periods of the Palace can be recognized derives from the fact that it was frequently shattered by earth-shocks and promptly rebuilt. Quakes, indeed, are still constantly felt there and in other parts of the island. When Nature does such things to him, man conceives of an earth-shaker god, who, by sufficient appeasement, may perhaps be persuaded not to do it again. Among the Greeks the bull was a creature sacred to both Zeus and Poseidon, and it may possibly have been sacred to a god among the Minoans.

Until Athens acquired her empire in the fifth century B.C., no east-Mediterranean dominion of the sea ever came near in size to the Minoan thalassocracy at its greatest. Islands lay like stepping-stones at either end of Crete, leading the overcrowded

Minoans to foreign countries and adventures. Evidence for their influence in Caria has already been mentioned ; and the islands of the Asiatic coasts have likewise produced traces of strong Minoan influence, if not, as yet, of actual occupation. But most of the important isles of the Ægean Sea, like Melos, Naxos, and Aegina, may have formed a part of the territorial empire of the Cretans ; while Minoan colonies may have existed both in Sicily and in Cyprus. The most important adjunct to Crete, however, during several centuries was mainland Greece, including all Peloponnesus, Attica and Bœotia ; for here there is ample evidence to show that the manners, fashions and pastimes of the governing class were modelled on those of the Minoans. Yet they were not of the same race or tongue, for we may feel confident that the great lords of Mycenæ, Tiryns, Pylos, Asine, Athens and Thebes spoke an early form of Greek, while their serfs and servants, of mixed Greek and pre-hellenic stock, spoke either Greek or some earlier language. It has been claimed that, when Minos took over Peloponnesus, there was a wholesale displacement of the population, and that southern Greece became virtually Cretan, but such a claim cannot be substantiated. At best, the relationship between Peloponnesus and Crete may have resembled the relationship between Norman and Angevin England on the one hand, and the kingdom of France on the other. English kings, as holders of French territories, were vassals of French kings ; much English architecture, calligraphy, carving and painting were variants of the French, and the Court followed French fashions. One may assume the Lords of Peloponnesus and Attica to have been similarly linked to Crete ; and it is certain that they imported Minoan goods and works of art on a large scale.

Yet there were great differences between the two civilizations due to their different origins ; and, for the mainland culture, the term " Helladic " has been coined because the name " Minoan " does not fit. The rulers of bronze-age Crete, secure in the affections of a united people and relying on an all-powerful fleet, lived in open unwallled palaces, and their cities seem to have needed little fortification. But the rulers of Helladic Greece had conquered a subject population, whom

they could trust as little as they trusted one another. Such men of necessity built them great fortifications, and the huge walls of Tiryns and Mycenæ appeared to classical Greeks as structures not made by the hands of man ; wherefore they were called Cyclopean, the work of the Cyclopes, giant sons of Poseidon. The turbulent lords of the mainland castles were in contrast with the more gentle Cretan rulers, whom their people held in affection ; and the evidence for this is the fact that Minos in legend was always celebrated for his almost ideal justice, a quality which a people is especially apt to attribute to a ruler who is loved. This virtue was ascribed to other legendary kings and princes of the Minoan realm, like Radamanthus and Talos ; for which reason these persons, with Minos, were thought by the classical Greeks to be the Judges of the Dead, deep in their knowledge of man's deeds, infallible in the administration of justice. Another legend, nevertheless, represented this same Minos as cruel and vengeful to his enemies, since it was he who imposed upon the Athenians the annual blood-tribute of seven youths and seven girls sent to the Labyrinth to be butchered by the Minotaur, a monstrous man with the head of a bull. As will later appear, real events are bound up with this seemingly fanciful tale.

Minoan art has exercised a kind of fascination over all who, during the twentieth century, have come to study it and know it. Its main mode of expression was through painting, not through architecture or sculpture. Planned architecture, indeed, such as was normal among Greeks and Romans and among the people who succeeded to the classical tradition, did not exist. A Minoan built something suitable for immediate requirements, knowing well that the Earth-Shaker might knock it down at any time. Then, if it remained standing and he wanted more accommodation, he built something new up against the first structure. As for sculpture, he excelled at small objects : jewellery, lively figures in bronze and faience, and exquisite statuettes in ivory. The fine local steatite does not appear to have been carved into life-size statues ; but certain Minoan bulls' heads of steatite, about half life-size, are among the finest sculptural works of art ever to be made. Evidence, as far as it goes, points to a lack of any life-size sculpture, and to

a special liking for wall paintings, which must have been abundant. Animals among plants and rocks were popular in the Middle Minoan period, about 1600 B.C. A stealthy cat, with skull and ears like those of Mediterranean cats today, stalks a pheasant which, by its attitude expresses the anxiety that every bird shows when it is aware of an unseen enemy. The "Blue Monkey" fresco is of about the same date. Papyrus and flowering reeds grow beside a stream, on the bank of which the monkey with clumsy hands tries to pick flowers. The colours, which even now have a certain richness, must have been originally of startling brilliance. Again of the same period is the famous fresco known as "The Ladies in Blue", a most accomplished composition. Paintings of the Late Minoan period, a hundred years or more after, are rather more stylized, as may be observed from the King walking in the garden, and from the griffin and plants on the walls of the throne-room.

While these Minoan frescoes follow certain conventions—showing profiles only, and full eyes, such as were common to Egyptian, Mesopotamian and archaic Greek art—they have a peculiar attraction of their own; for they appear to us to be simultaneously childish and sophisticated, formalist and realist, meticulous and impressionist. The artists who produced them were often admirable draughtsmen and brilliant painters, who had gone some way towards the discovery that recession in depth can be achieved by the deliberate juxtaposition of certain startling colours. With the fall of Minoan Crete, this trick of painting was lost and only rediscovered by the Byzantines, one of whom—Domenikos Theotokopoulos, a Cretan known as El Greco—introduced the device to western Europe. It is a peculiar fact that, although El Greco is unlikely ever to have seen a Minoan fresco, one sometimes feels that there is a faint touch of kinship between his painting and that of his vastly remote Minoan ancestors.

Two of the most important phenomena in the lives of the Minoans have not yet received attention—the passion for the bull ring and the practice of trading with Egypt; a consideration of these is essential, firstly, because these phenomena are linked with the sudden fall of the Minoan empire; secondly, because the memory of them, moving among other peoples by



devious ways such as led to epic, heroic and fanciful imaginings, produced one of the most remarkable and popular tales ever told to mankind. Meanwhile, the massed material evidence, which has been all too briefly described, permits us to attempt an estimate of the value of Minoan civilization for mankind, and especially for European man. Much has been written about the Minoans; and there are two widely differing views about them. To Sir Arthur Evans—their real discoverer—they were near perfection; theirs was the golden age; and, when one stayed as his guest at Boar's Hill, one perceived that he was himself becoming, year by year, more nearly a reincarnate Minoan. The other view about the inhabitants of bronze-age Crete stems from the disease known as "puritanical prejudice", against which some few scientists and archaeologists have failed to acquire complete immunity. The person conditioned to regard the Parthenon as the acme of art, fifth-century Athenians as the perfection of manhood, women as creatures to be kept subordinate, and Plato—or rather the academic "idea" of Plato—as the perfect mind, did not approve of Minoans. Their ramshackle ways of building, their Iberian-like ideas of sport, their alluringly "indecent" women, their great interest in commerce—all these things were rather shocking. And so the Minoans used to be turned down as obviously immoral, un-Nordic, and therefore—a favourite word—decadent. Little sneers were thrown out, like paper darts, at Minoan art; and, when some statuette of unusual loveliness was revealed, the shaken head and the shrugged shoulder were employed to question its authenticity. In truth, the Minoans were neither in a state of perfection nor in a state of decadence. Their civilization is another proof, confirming what we already knew, that the human race, given sufficient interesting food to eat and a healthy climate to live in, is versatile, adaptable, unpredictable, and endowed with ingenuity and resource. If this civilization had not come into existence, something would have been missing from the rich alloy of human qualities which became the classical Greece we know, and the world, even today, would doubtless have been poorer.

Under the careful analysis of archaeologists, making their deductions after the manner of detectives, the history of a great

civilization has emerged and Minos himself has ceased to be a shadowy figure. During his reign, or that of some member of his dynasty about the middle of the fifteenth century B.C., a sense of security and of well-being probably prevailed among the people of Crete, and one may suppose that the density of population gave them no cause for alarm because a working economic system functioned, and because a large well-organized fleet maintained the first world thalassocracy against every piratical or hostile ship. One measure of the well-being of the Minoans is the amount of time they seemingly were able to devote to the watching of sports. It is natural to mankind, not only to play, but also to watch the play of others, whether games that demand individual effort or team games are taking place. Of the two, the team games have, until our own period, been the rarer, and Minoan bull-baiting may be the earliest of them all. In this, a team of acrobatic matadors worked in perfect concert against the bull. There is evidence that the Greeks played one team game, hockey ; but no record exists of such a form of sport in Roman times, apart from the fact that the bull-ring games came back in Roman Provence, whence, perhaps, they moved to Spain, Portugal and Spanish America. Polo, certainly a team game, must receive mention although its origin lies outside the European orbit. The proto-football of Lancashire may have held a germ of team work ; and the most democratic game ever invented—village cricket, which puts lord of the manor and blacksmith on an absolute equality—brought the team-spirit to its fulfilment. Most games, played or watched, are contests of one individual against another, or against " the field ". This holds for the Minoan and Homeric boxer, Greek Olympic athletic competitor, jockey or charioteer, Roman gladiator, Byzantine tennis player, mediaeval jousting knight, and modern dirt-track ace. But the Minoans, it would appear, belonged to the same small group as the Spaniards and Anglo-Saxons, in their passion for a high-grade, professional, team-organized spectacle.

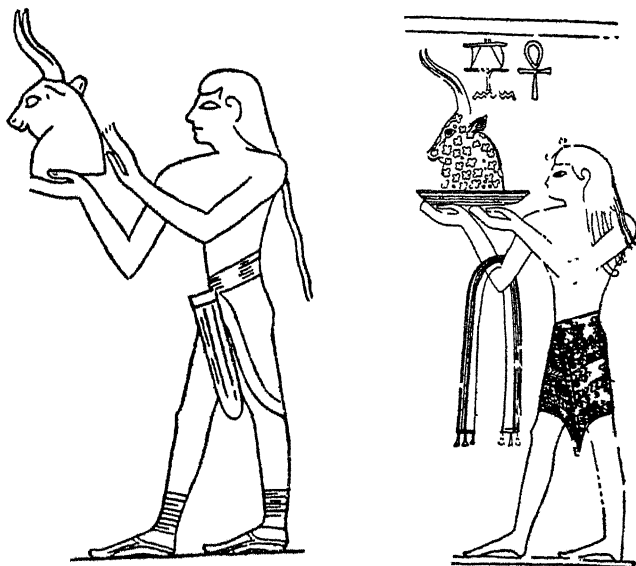
So abundant are the monuments of this sport that we can confidently reconstruct events. The wild bulls, out in the open country, were caught in rope nets, as appears on one of a pair of Minoan golden cups, the other cup showing the captured



*By courtesy of the Candia Museum*

Fresco from Knossos; the Bull-ring, c. 1550 B.C.

bull hobbled, and mollified by its introduction to a cow. The bull was brought to Knossos; and somewhere close to the palace an arena was contrived where crowds could watch the spectacle. In the palace a miniature fresco was discovered, showing in the background a high gallery with roof-top and windows, from which elegant ladies, dressed like the "Blue Ladies" already illustrated, look down over the heads of a great crowd of people of both sexes. Below this point the fresco breaks off; but it is likely that it once held a bull-ring scene like that shown on another palace fresco. Here two girls and a boy are performing, the former pale of skin, the latter a reddish sunburnt colour. Facing the charging bull, a girl athlete seizes a horn, and, as the beast flings up its head, gets enough spring to land on the bull's back, to grip its flanks and turn a back-somersault. Both these movements are combined in the fresco, the second being performed by a boy. As the athlete leaves the bull, the second girl catches him to break his fall. There is a lovely ivory statuette in Toronto which represents a girl in this exact position. Her face is tense as she wants to catch her comrade: she wears a golden apron protecting groin and belly, over the ribs a corsage held by wide gold shoulder-straps, and a collar. But the breasts, each with a golden stud for a nipple, are bare, following the regular Minoan fashion. Similar is the ivory figure in Oxford of a



Keftiu, or Cretans, from Egyptian wall-paintings, c. 1450 B C

young boy, clad in a little gold apron, who, with arms raised, awaits the bull's charge. The reconstruction of the whole spectacle is completed by the Spencer-Churchill Minoan bull made of solid bronze ; for here the acrobat upon the bull rests for an instant back to back upon the beast before he leaps off. What we do not know is how many made a team against the bull. Possibly seven. That remarkable legend, linking Athens with Crete, must have had a foundation in fact. One of the sons of Minos was killed in a war with Athens, and the Cretans exacted an annual tribute of seven boys and seven girls—perhaps two teams—who were devoted to the "Minotaur", that is to the Bull of Minos. There were casualties in this sport ; but many a well-trained boy and girl must have survived to dedicate, as thank-offerings in some shrine, gold and ivory or bronze figurines. We do not know how the spectacle ended ; a team, of course, would gradually tire a bull out ; and we may hazard a guess that, at a given signal, the king himself, armed with a long bronze sword, might leap into the arena to

administer the final stroke. If it should happen that age was depriving his limbs of their former agility, there would assuredly be a young prince to deputize. In any case, those Greek and Cretan youths and girls—unarmed and dependent only on precision of timing and muscular perfection—might claim, in their brief day, more glory than the most brilliant *torero* of Spain or Spanish America.

From the beginning of the Middle Minoan era, about 2200 B.C., onwards, there is material evidence of regular trade between Crete and Egypt ; for Egyptian objects are found in the former, and Minoan objects in the latter, kingdom. By the beginning of the Late Minoan period, about 1500 B.C., this trade had attained large dimensions ; and pictures of Cretans, wearing the same sparse costumes that they are shown wearing on Minoan frescoes, appear on a series of Egyptian paintings. The name by which the Egyptians knew them was “the people of Keftiu” ; and they depicted those islanders from “the Great Green”—the name they gave to the salt sea—as bringing in large ingots of bronze, vases of pottery filled with oil of the finest quality, splendid cups and ewers of precious metal, and those highly-valued *rhytóns*, or wine-containers, sculptured in black or dark green steatite, shaped as the heads of young bulls and fitted with horns encased in gold. Their passion for the bull-ring induced the Minoans to make these exquisite objects, which were not necessarily mere religious “furniture”, since their makers were ready to export them to other countries. Fragments of four different *rhytóns* have turned up in the Peloponnesus ; and several are shown in Egyptian frescoes, which depict Keftiu, or Minoans, bringing them to Egypt. Only one nearly complete specimen, probably found in Egypt, has so far survived. There is, however, no corresponding evidence to show the kind of goods that the Minoans took back from Egypt in payment for their own exports ; but one may assume that they would be things not available in Crete, such as gold, ivory, linen, papyrus, spices, apes, cats, and certain rare birds. All this merchandise between the two countries was conveyed in Minoan ships ; for the Egyptians were never adventurous seamen. Their skill as river-boatmen is evident, since the Nile was the crowded highway of the realm. But a

man accustomed to seeing a shore to right and a shore to left is timid when he has only a beach on one side of him, and he is unlikely to run out into the shoreless main. Egyptians, by hugging the coasts of Palestine, Phoenicia, and Syria, got as far as Cyprus, but not beyond. To reach Crete, you might keep land in sight as far as Derna ; but, after that, you must trust your inexperience to the terrors of two hundred landless miles over the "Great Green"; and you must abandon your Goddess of the Sea—Isis, but "Lighthouse Isis", Isis Pharia as the Greeks called her later—who bids you not to let the land escape your eyes. So the merchantmen of Minos were the carriers, and many men of Keftiu came to Egypt. Some Egyptians—not willingly, perhaps, but on Pharaoh's orders—went occasionally in Keftian ships to Crete ; for objects of Egyptian work of a purely personal nature, such as would have had no interest for a Minoan, have been found in Crete ; and the visiting Egyptians must have brought back strange tales of the wonders of the country. Not only the bull-fights, and the ingenious sanitation and canalized ducts in a land of heavy rainfall, impressed them, but also the apparent vastness of the varied, teeming land. As you navigate the Nile, one village and one stretch of landscape is like another village and another stretch of landscape. Monotony prevents a clear perception of the time spent in covering long endless miles. But the Egyptian visitor to Crete was aware of many roads and paths and tracks, of villages, small townships, large towns built round palaces, each different from the other, and occurring every few miles. Not only did Crete seem to him very much larger than in reality it is ; but, as he took the highway which linked the south of the island to Knossos, as he stood at the top of the pass and looked north at the Archipelago, he could see countless islands, which his interpreter told him with pride were "all ours! A hundred cities and a thousand isles."

In the days of the Egyptian empire of Asia, founded by Thothmes III and maintained by Amenhotep III, the keepers of historical records among the priests could draw for their information about current world affairs on the reports of subject peoples as far away as Syria and the Hittite frontier. It is possible that they may have learnt from some such source

rumours of great armaments prepared by war-like people beyond the isles, northern people ill-disposed to the men of Keftiu. If they did, it went into the records ; for we know, even from the sparse surviving fragments, that it was the Egyptian habit to keep records in great detail about foreign affairs. Anyhow, we may be quite sure that somewhere about 1400 B.C. the sailors and traders of Keftiu ceased coming, and never came again. Fifty years later, a certain prophet named Ipu Wer, in a long admonishment addressed to Pharaoh upon the sad condition of Egypt, cried out, " Nobles were embalmed with oil imported from as far away as Keftiu, but they come no longer ! " If Egyptians had been sailors, they might have learnt why ; but they never tried to find the reason. So far as Egypt was concerned, Keftiu had vanished, swallowed up by the all-devouring sea. When, centuries later, men of Crete came to the land of the Nile they were Dorians, just like other Dorian Greeks. They had nothing to do with the men of Keftiu, submerged for ever.

Plato began during his forties to teach at the Academy in Athens. About the year 364 B.C., when he had reached the age of 65, his fame was immense, for he had already written many of his most celebrated works ; and, at about that age, he designed on the grand scale a trilogy of dialogues which, when completed, was to be his masterpiece. The Trilogy was cast for four parts, played by Socrates—the detached listener ready with rare but pregnant comment—Timæus, Critias and Hermocrates. Each dialogue, within the trilogy, was to take its name from the speaker who held the floor in that particular piece. The *Timæus* was written ; the *Critias* was left unfinished, perhaps because some external trouble about 375 B.C. prevented its completion ; but the *Hermocrates* was not even begun. Its place was taken by Plato's last, longest and most elaborate dialogue, *The Laws*, which he completed before he died in 347 B.C. at the age of 82. The conception was magnificent, and worthy of the mature greatness of Plato's mind. Three representative Greeks—Timæus, a Locrian from Greek South Italy, Critias, an Athenian, and Hermocrates, a Syracusan—were to set forth in turn the explanation of the known

world. The first dialogue was about Natural Science, the second about Human Society, the third should have been about Civilization based on Law ; and the whole impressive scheme was to be built round a story current in Plato's family and in that of his cousin Critias, and now given for the first time to the civilized world—"The Story of Atlantis."


In the dialogues, Socrates and Critias are presented as still alive ; the conversation is therefore supposed to take place about 410 B.C. After a preliminary *résumé* of a former discussion, Critias produces his story :

"When I was a little boy of ten," said Critias, "I used to sit and listen to my old grandfather aged ninety when he was wont to tell us a wonderful story. Critias the Elder, my grandfather, was the son of Dropides, a cousin of the great Solon, and that is how we got this story in our family, for it is Solon's story. If only that famous man returning to Athens from his long travels had not become involved in politics, he, poet as he was, might have turned into a great epic the story which he brought back from Egypt, the very story I heard in my childhood. Solon, it seems, spent a long time in the city of Saïs in the Nile delta, for the priests there, believing their goddess Neïth to be identical with Athene, are well-disposed to the city of Athens. It was there that an aged priest, versed in the records of past history which are kept with such care in their temples, told Solon a story of great events in which Athens too had been deeply involved, though the Athenians, being—as the old priest pointed out—mere children, knew nothing of these happenings. The tale was about a war to the death between Athens and a great and insolent island empire, which invaded at the same time all Europe and all Asia, falling upon them from the Atlantic Ocean, which gave to the empire the name 'Atlantis.' Its attack was concentrated especially upon the land of Athens, which, abandoned by all its allies, fought on alone, conquered the invaders and saved itself and the world from enslavement. All this occurred a vastly long time before the latest of the many great floods and earthquakes which have altered the surface of the inhabited world, and it was that latest world-disaster which swallowed up 'Atlantis' forever in the Ocean."

This start to the tale may seem a little unpromising ; but there is more in it than at first appears, for it is important to



distinguish when we can four different strands in the story of which we are sketching a brief outline :

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- (i) What the priest in Saïs, quoting from his old Egyptian historical records, told Solon.
  - (ii) What Solon, with his good rationalist Greek mind, added by way of conjecture to the notes he had taken in Egypt before spinning his yarn to old cousin Dropides, great-grandfather of the celebrated Critias. That young man states definitely, in the second dialogue, that he is in personal possession of Solon's manuscripts which he has examined with care.
  - (iii) What Plato, using the Solonian material, added in order to bring the story into line with fourth-century topographical knowledge and town-planning notions.
  - (iv) What Plato in order to construct a first-rate "novel" evolved from certain odd statements attributed in Solon's manuscript to the priest in Saïs.

Fortunately, our knowledge of the kind of information which Egyptian historical archives contained enables us approximately to estimate what really stood in the texts quoted by the priest at Saïs :

"Far out in the 'Great Green', as far to the west as men have ever dared to sail, there lay a great, powerful, many-cited island, head of a large empire of many lesser isles. It used to trade with us Egyptians, and it owned land in Libya and Asia Minor, and it sought control over all coasts and over the north-lands beyond. In the end, there was a great war between your people of the north-lands and this empire, or so our records suggest. Presumably, you north-land Greeks destroyed it, for we never heard tell of it again. Indeed, this will have happened before the last of the great series of earthquakes and floods in that part of the world which you, Solon, inhabit ; so it looks to us as though the said empire has been engulfed in the 'Great Green.' "

If such, or something like it, were what the priest recounted, there would be small difficulty, for us with our knowledge, in recognizing a reference to the Minoan Empire. But to Solon the tale was startlingly new, and he might easily take references

to Greeks as applying specifically to Athenians. When there was talk of "the last great flood", his mind leapt to the Hesiodic tale of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the sole survivors of the Greek Deluge story; and, for this reason, he assumed the events to have occurred long before the fifteenth century B.C. If the priest talked of an empire far away, as far to the west as men have ever sailed, that took a sixth-century Greek like Solon right beyond the Pillars of Herakles—the Gibraltar Straits—and he assumed Atlantis to have lain in the western ocean, which was named after the range of north-African mountains called the Atlas mountains; indeed, Solon, rather than Plato, must have given the name "Atlantis" to the empire of the sea. Absurdities often pass unrecognized by people who are elaborating on a plain tale, such as the priest told in Sais. What indeed should a great empire, lying far out in the Atlantic Ocean, want with a costly naval campaign directed against the tiny Athenian state three thousand miles away? But a war between Minoan Crete and Helladic Athens, one hundred and eighty miles apart, is an event most likely to have taken place. Plato's own addition to the story, as told by Critias, is clearly the piece about the land of Athens, abandoned by its allies, fighting alone to conquer the invaders. Here is a deliberate reflection back to the rôle of the Athenians in the Persian Wars of 490 and 480 B.C.

The story of Atlantis, and an elaborate description of the island, was continued by Plato at considerable length in the second dialogue, the *Critias*. After an imaginative account of a glorified prehistoric Athens, there follows a description of Atlantis designed to provide a contrast; for, when the genealogy of its kings is traced, they are said all to be sprung from the union of Poseidon with a mortal girl named Clito, who bore in succession five pairs of twins; wherefore ten kings ruled the island, but the descendants of the first and eldest twins were set over the other nine, who were vassal-kings. Neither the old priest nor Solon can have made this contribution, which is Plato's own—a humorous parody of the ponderous genealogies which Hesiod concocted. Next, the size of the central island is mentioned in terms that would imply something infinitely larger than Crete as we know it. Yet Egyptian

visitors, whose descriptions might have been used for the records, would, as already noted, have been deceived as to the island's true dimensions. Therefore, what the priest exaggerated Solon probably expanded ; and Plato, for the sake of effect, produced a further inflation. The capital, which contained the temple of Poseidon and the chief palace of the kings, was ringed by three concentric canals, and a long ship-canal linked it with the open sea. Within this city was an abundant supply of springs, hot and cold ; so that baths were common, not only for kings and courtiers, but also for citizens, both men and women, and even special baths for horses and other animals. The water was carried off, by an elaborate drainage system, towards a grove where there were gardens and sports grounds. The south of the island was the part where this capital city lay, in a great plain sheltered by mountains from the north wind—indeed almost surrounded by mountains which ran down close to the sea, except for one place where the canal debouched into the sea. In the mountains were many populous villages, streams, pastures and forests full of game.

Much of interest is contained in this section, which is part Plato's own and part, perhaps, in the Egyptian tradition. Town-planning appealed to Plato, who had before him Piræus, the Athenian harbour-town, so admirably laid out by Hippodamus. This and the Greek-like temple and the strange canals are all foreign to the unplanned building methods of the Minoans. But all the rest might well have been passed on by the priest in Sais reporting from his records to Solon. Elaborate bathing installations, abundant water, artificial drainage, were all things unfamiliar in a dry land like Attica. Even the capital's situation and surroundings have an exact counterpart ; for one must remember that an Egyptian visiting Minoan Crete would have landed at Komo in the South, would have got first to the city of Phaistos, a second capital, situated in the big plain of the Messara, the geographical character of which corresponds accurately with the details of Atlantis ; though, as before, the latter is always described on an inflated scale. In certain details, however, Platonic parody plays a subtle part—for example, in a description of the armed forces and navy under the command of the chief king of Atlantis, which cari-

captures the writings of some systematizing historian describing the strength of the Persian Empire.

Towards the end of the surviving portion of the *Critias*, there occurs the most remarkable of all the Atlantis episodes, in which Plato has made an ingenious blend of tradition based on fact with supernatural mystery. For we meet a version—varied, yet none the less a version—of the Minoan bull-ring, of the sacrifice of a bull to the Earth-Shaker, and libations of bulls' blood. At the same time, we recall a Greek story that Minos prayed to Poseidon to send from the sea a bull for him to sacrifice, but that, when his prayer was answered, Minos found the bull so handsome that he would not kill it. Poseidon therefore caused the Queen, Pasiphaë, to fall in love with the bull ; and, Daidalos having disguised her as a cow, she bore the bull-headed Minotaur, the Minos Bull. And we also meet the famous shadowy kings—perfect in justice like Minos, Rhadamanthus and Talos—seated as though among the shades of the underworld, delivering faultless judgement.

Critias himself is the speaker :

“ The administration of government and the exchequer were from the start organized as follows. Each of the ten kings ruled in his own part of the realm, governed the citizens, made the by-laws, administered penalties and even capital punishment. But the authority of the kings and their mutual relations were subject to the decrees of Poseidon which had been inscribed by the first kings on a block of brass in the precinct of Poseidon. There the kings met periodically either every four or every five years and deliberated on state affairs ; they decided whether any of their number had broken a law and they sat in judgement. And before submitting to be judged they all pledged one another after the following fashion. Wild bulls were turned loose in the precinct of Poseidon. The ten kings, left all alone, prayed to the god to make them capture that beast which he desired, and then set forth unarmed with only staves and nets. The bull which they secured they dragged to the block of brass and cut the bull's throat over the block according as the law commanded. Having made a sacrifice, they filled a great jar with blood sprinkling each one of themselves with some of it. And, when all the flesh was burnt on the altar, they dipped cups of gold into the jar and, pouring blood on the fire, swore

a great oath to judge justly according to the law. . . . Then each drank some blood and gave the golden cup as a gift to the god. When darkness was come and the fire of the sacrifice had died, the ten kings in cloaks of lustrous deep sapphire blue sat them down in the ashes of their sacrifice. Every light in the sanctuary was put out, and all night long the kings judged one another and submitted themselves to the judgement of their peers."

After this moving story, Plato had written no more than a single paragraph when he broke off in the middle of a sentence. The third dialogue was never written but, years later, he published his longest work, the *Laws*. Internal evidence suggests that in the meanwhile he himself had possibly visited Egypt and returned by way of Crete, where the setting of the dialogue is given as a long walk from Knossos to the cave on Mount Dikte, to which, men said, Minos went every eight years to hold in the darkness converse with Zeus, and to receive anew the Laws of God. The whole opening section is full of the need for justice, and of reverent praise for those great judges of another day, Minos and Rhadamanthus. One may, perhaps, hazard a question and ask whether Plato, after he broke off the *Critias*, came to suspect—because of the things he heard in Egypt and things he saw in Crete—that Solon's Atlantis was, after all, the empire over which Minos had once ruled? We shall never know, though we may reflect that so brilliant a mind was trained to make acute deductions.

Meanwhile, we must, on our part, keep two points clear. Firstly, *never before Plato wrote the Timaeus was the name "Atlantis" known or mentioned*. If Solon invented the name, no one knew it until it was popularized by Plato. Secondly, we may not shut our eyes to the numerous accretions and embellishments of the Atlantis legend which are quite inappropriate to ancient Crete; but we may also reflect that other events in history have suffered a sea-change far more extravagant than anything that Solon and Plato between them brought about during their editing and re-editing of the tales told by an old priest in Saïs. Early in the sixth century of our era, a Roman soldier of fortune named Artus, or Arturus, came to Britain and, taking command of the combined forces of a

number of British "kings", led them into battle and inflicted some crushing and well-merited defeats on Angles and Saxons from Kent, Sussex and Wessex. He was probably killed about A.D. 537 in the battle of Camlan. When Chretien de Troyes, Mallory and Tennyson had finished embellishing, editing, embroidering, filleting, fluffing and feudalizing a simple story there was little indeed left of plain historic fact. But, even though Atlantis and its circular canals may be as fictitious as Camelot and the Round Table, we can still recognize here hints of historic conflicts between Minoan Crete and Helladic Athens, just as in the Arthurian saga we find hints of battles between Welsh and Saxons.

How did the Minoan civilization meet its end? Was the old priest right in his talk of a war between Athens and the Island Empire? Perhaps the best answer has been given by the wisest and most expert of Minoan archaeologists, the late John Pendlebury, whose account we follow. The Greek mainland kings of the house of Perseus and of the house of Pelops, some of whom have now risen from legend into history, were never reputed to have had any dealings with Crete; but there was one great figure who had. The various tales about Theseus indicate that he controlled all the coasts and harbours of the Saronic Gulf; while it was he who merged all Attica into a united state, with Athens for its capital. It was from Athens that Minos drew his yearly tribute of boys and girls destined for the bull-ring; but Theseus began to feel that his new realm was sufficiently strong, and with his allies he decided that Crete must be destroyed. Economic reasons made this desirable; but the scandal of the annual tribute could be used to inflame the minds of the Greeks. According to legend preserved in a yearly ceremony at Athens, Theseus sailed for Crete in late April or early May. On the western façade of the palace at Knossos are the marks of fire where blazing beams fell during the sack, and the smoke was carried northwards by a violent south wind; and a wind of such force only blows in Crete during late April or early May. Thus we know the time of year, but not the year itself, of the destruction of Knossos. There was, however, one ancient Greek source, of which the precise authority cannot easily be estimated, that gave for the



reign of the last Minos years corresponding to 1462-1423 B.C.; and these dates are in fair agreement with our Cretan and Egyptian archaeological evidence. For the last scene, we have the most dramatic room on any ancient site, the throne-room where Minos' throne still stands guarded by its painted griffins. The place was found by the excavators in complete confusion, an oil-jar overturned and ritual vessels scattered about. It looks as if the king had been hurried to undergo, or to perform, some last dread rite to save his people. Did he wear, as perhaps he sometimes did, a bull's-head mask? Was it into this room that Theseus burst to find the Minotaur?

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The discovery that the Solon-Plato story of Atlantis is based on Egyptian memories of Minoan Crete seems first to have been made by K. T. Frost; Sir Arthur Evans accepted this, J. D. S. Pendlebury expanded, and I may claim a few added details. The most convenient edition of *Timaeus and Critias* is that of A. Rivaud, who, though unaware of the English scholars' views, came near to an independent association of Atlantis and Crete.